The Writings of *W. Carl Ketcherside*

Volume 4 • Books

Stone-Campbell *e*-Prints

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The Royal Priesthood
The Kingdom of the Messiah
Simple Trusting Faith
The Parable of Telstar
Heaven Help Us
The Death of the Custodian
The Twisted Scriptures
Talks to Jews and Non-Jews
Adventure of Faith
Colony of Heaven
In the Beginning
Pilgrimage of Joy

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May 2024

PUBLISHER'S FOREWORD

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As may be seen in the partially annotated bibliography at the end of this volume, Carl Ketcherside wrote 32 books over a period of 36 years, from 1944 through 1981, in addition to the 16 bound volumes of *Mission Messenger* from 1957–1975.

The last of his books, his autobiography, was published in installments by *Restoration Review*, from January 1976 through December of 1981. It was later published posthumously in a single volume as *Pilgrimage of Joy* by College Press in 1991 and by SCM e-prints in 2010 in Kindle format.

Ketcherside's books published before 1956 consist of collections of radio sermons (13), a book on church discipline, one concerning Christians colleges, another on carnal warfare, and his public debates (4). Those published from 1956 forward (12)— which he wrote from a renewed perspective that began in 1951 and continued to develop through 1957— make up the content of this volume.

Except for minor changes to format, this publication is a reasonable facsimile of the original publications it reproduces, although it includes the foreword to the Diversity Press edition of *The Twisted Scriptures* (1992) by Leroy Garrett.

Editor, Stone-Campbell *e*-Prints
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THE ROYAL PRIESTHOOD

by W. Carl Ketcherside

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THE ROYAL PRIESTHOOD

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What It Is All About

Contents

Every child of God is a priest! **Every man and woman who is a Christian has entered "the priesthood." The only high priest in God's system today is in heaven. That is the theme of this book. It is just that simple. If the Bible teaches that, this book is in harmony with the will of God; if the Bible authorizes a special priesthood composed of a clerical class, in this age, then this book is wrong in its presentation, and its author must stand condemned as one who opposes the plan of God.**

I have no intent or desire to defend modern religious institutions, nor to champion the societies which have been spawned in the fertile brains of fallible men. It is my firm conviction that the community of saints planted by the holy apostles in the first generation of the Christian era constituted the divine pattern for the entire dispensation. My humble efforts will be bent, not toward the refinement, amendment, or reformation of any existing sect, but toward restoration of the primitive "colony of heaven" as representing God's ideal to which we must conform if we would meet his approval.

No careful student of the early congregation of believers can fail to be impressed with the simplicity of its worship and functioning. Imbued with a fervent zeal, motivated by a common purpose, possessed of a deep love for each other, "all the believers kept together" and "among all those who had embraced the faith there was but one heart and one soul" (Acts 2:44; 5:32). In such a company each felt under compulsion of

spirit to do all he could to edify his fellows. None served for gain. Those who had personal property and real estate sold their possessions and distributed to all who had need; no one thought of threatening the needy with eternal destruction if they did not support a privileged class.

In the original church of God there was no distinction between clergy and laity. God's clergy (portion or lot) consisted of God's laity (people). Every member of the "laity" was a member of the "clergy" and vice versa. Every person in the divine arrangement was a minister of God. One "entered the ministry" by coming into the Christ. The holy and unblemished church can never be restored until those who love the Lord recapture in the fullest sense the picture of a "priesthood of all believers" free from the taint of a special caste.

The religious world in general has lost the pattern of the corporate worship of the original community of baptized believers. The early church gathered around a table; the modern church sits before a pulpit. The Lord placed the table in the church so it could remember its debt to him; the clergy placed the pulpit in the church to bring it in debt to them. In the early church they all spoke one by one; today all the speaking is done by one. Then the spirit was kindled; now it is quenched. Then they claimed to love each other and talked about Jesus; now they claim to love Jesus and talk about each other. In those days all exerted an effort to exhort; now all must be exhorted to exert an effort.

The primitive disciples did not ask the world to come and get the gospel, they took it to them. They gathered to eat the Lord's Supper, then scattered to preach the Word. Wherever there was a Christian and a sinner, there was a gospel meeting. They announced the glad tidings to masters and mistresses, friends and neighbors. They did it simply but fervently. They told about Jesus, his death and resurrection. They testified of their faith in him. They preached him in chariots along the road,

in prison cells, by river brinks, in private homes, in halls and in synagogues. The whole earth was their auditorium, the thing at hand their pulpit.

Much of the irreverence, formality and cold ritual of these days is the result of a loss of significance of a priesthood of all believers. The sense of individual relationship to God with its attendant responsibilities has disappeared in the modern sectarian strife for supremacy of party. To restore the primitive community of saints a great reformation of thought is essential. This book has been written to help the good and honest heart properly evaluate our present status in the light of God's revelation.

PLAN OF THE BOOK

You will find the book divided into two parts. The first section is a study of the whole subject of priesthood as taught in the Bible. It deals with the reason for religion and the necessity of the priesthood in an approach unto God. It traces the history of priesthood through the Patriarchal, and Jewish dispensations, and points out the culmination of God's ideal in the Christian era which is designated as "the end of the ages."

The second division considers the arguments for a special priesthood to officiate for men "in things pertaining unto God." The case for the clergy can best be presented by that great institution which resulted from its creation, and then did the most to perpetuate and justify it. If the Roman Church cannot successfully defend the right of a special clergy to exist, no other religious organization need assume the task. That church postulates her own right to exist and to command attention of religious seekers upon the very basis of her priesthood. Destroy that foundation and the whole superstructure tumbles in disorder.

Accordingly, we chose what we believe to be the most

outstanding presentation of the subject by a modern scholar. Dr. John A. O'Brien, of Notre Dame University, is universally recognized as a scholar, philosopher, and expositor. His reputation as a writer in his particular field is unexcelled. It was our good fortune, during our research, to discover in popular booklet form, his treatise entitled: *"The Priesthood— A Divine Institution."* **In correspondence with the author we learned that this presentation had subsequently been incorporated as a chapter in a book which was protected by copyright. Dr. O'Brien consented to release the copyright restrictions for inclusion of the material in this book, if I would pay for the privilege of using his treatise. He suggested the sum of twenty-five dollars to be paid by me to Notre Dame. His final letter in the correspondence follows:**

Dear Mr. Ketcherside:

Having received no reply to my letter of several years ago, I naturally assumed that the proposition made therein was unacceptable, and hence I am surprised by your letter.

Upon reflecting on the matter and before entering into a definite contract, I would want the assurance that various paragraphs from my writing "The Priesthood: A Divine Institution" are not to be taken out of the context in such a way as to create a misleading impression. It is with the understanding that this is not done that I am granting the requested permission in consideration of the payment of $25 to the University of Notre Dame.

The credit line to be printed should run as follows: From "The Priesthood: A Divine Institution," a chapter in *The Faith of Millions,* **John A. O'Brien, Our Sunday Visitor, Huntington, Indiana, copyright 1938 by John A. O'Brien.**

Looking forward to seeing a copy of your book as soon as it is published, I am,

Sincerely yours,

John A. O'Brien

The eminent theologian and Doctor of Philosophy is certainly justified in his request for proper treatment of his manuscript in any attempt at analysis and replication. For that reason we are publishing his article in its entirety, and while we are presenting it in paragraph form to make our refutation meet his argument more directly, the treatise by Dr. O'Brien will be set in distinctive type so that the interested reader by merely turning a few pages of the book between paragraphs, to the next occurrence of such type face, can read the entire article written to uphold the opinion that the special priesthood is of divine origin.

If it seems that our language is too harsh in this final section of the book, we assure you that it was not meant thus to be. The author entertains a wholesome respect for the sincere religious convictions of every man on earth, regardless of how divergent from his own views they may be. Coupled with that respect is a deep conviction of his own which makes him an implacable foe of every form of clericalism, whether exemplified in the lowliest professional preacher who serves for hire, or the pope who is looked upon as a spiritual father by millions. With such fervent feeling it is to be expected that in condemnation of a system which it is believed robs the saints of their rights and liberties, the language of exposure may sometimes be pointed, pungent and plain.

OTHER ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The reader will observe that we have used the *Revised Standard Version* of the holy scriptures more than any other version. There are numerous reasons for this, not the least of which is the personal view that this scholarly work is generally superior to most of the commonly used versions. Inasmuch as

this version is copyrighted we insert herewith the authorization to use the quotations found in this book.

> **Dear Mr. Ketcherside:**
>
> **Thank you for your letter of October 5th and your interest in the Revised Standard Version of the Bible.**
>
> **This letter is your authority to use 250 selections from the Revised Standard Version through the text of your book entitled: "The Royal Priesthood." There is, of course, no fee involved, but we would ask you to state that the quotations are from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible and used by permission of the copyright owners: The National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.**
>
> **Should you require more permissions, kindly let me know.**
>
> **Yours very truly,**
> **THOMAS NELSON & SONS**
> **W. R. McCulley**
> **President**

Credits for brief historical quotations will generally be given in conjunction with such quotations in the body of the book. It is extremely difficult after years of study to recall the many sources to which one is indebted for the formulation or crystallization of his own views, but the author desires especially to mention the following: *History of Priestcraft in All Ages and Nations,* **by William Howitt (1833);** *Christianity Restored* **by Alexander Campbell (1835);** *History of the Planting and Training of the Christian Church,* **by Dr. Augustus Neander (1844);** *Ministry* **in** *the Church of Christ,* **by David King (1870);** *The Early Church,* **by David Duff, M.A., D.D., LL.D. (1891);** *The Early Days of Christianity,* **by Frederic W. Farrar, D.D., F.R.S. (1884);** *The First Age of Christianity,* **by Ernest F. Scott, D.D.,** *(1926); The Faith and Life of the Early Church,* **by W. R. Slater, M.A. (1892);** *Christian Worship in the Primitive Church,* **by A. B. McDonald,**

Ph.D. (1934).

It is our sincere hope that this little volume may be a contributing factor in the stimulation of thought among those whose honest hearts make them unwilling to remain in camp halfway between Babylon and Jerusalem. This book is not exhaustive in its treatment of the subject, but suggestive in nature, and is intended to arouse God's children to think for themselves. We can never restore the primitive church until we recapture the spirit which dominated the lives of the early saints, all of whom were impelled by an unconquerable passion to know that truth which makes men free. If we can aid in any degree to a restoration of that liberty and freedom to think, speak and act, which is the divinely given heritage of every Christian, we will be satisfied.

The Dawn of Religion

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In the beginning man had no religion. In the Garden of Eden he respected God, reverenced His being, and served without it. Religion belongs to sinful man. The word is formed from *re,* "back"; and *lego,* "to bind." It is that which binds man back to God. In his primeval innocence man was not separated from God, and needed nothing to bind him back. In this state the Creator freely conversed with the being made in His own image, and there was no fear in the heart of the creature, nor was there any sense of shame (Gen. 2:22).

The advent of sin changed this happy condition. When man and his counterpart transgressed God's law, "they heard the sound of the Lord walking up and down in the garden at the breeze of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the face of the Lord in the midst of the trees of the garden." When God called unto the man and asked his whereabouts, the reply was, "I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, for I was naked, and I hid myself" (Gen. 3:8, 9). Sin produces guilt, shame and a desire for concealment. It also produced a need for religion if man is to be reconciled to God, and restored to his former condition, for iniquity makes for separation between a man and his God (Isa. 59:2).

Inasmuch as sin is an offense against the dignity and majesty of God, the terms of reconciliation must be dictated by the offended and not by the offender. The religion which binds man back to God must be one which originates in the divine, and

not the human mind. God proposes the conditions, man must accept or reject them. Since man cannot ascertain the thoughts of God, except as He reveals them, the acceptable system of religion must be a revelation. It represents, then, not the groping, climbing, or struggling toward heaven upon a ladder erected by the trial-and-error method of human experience, but a bold approach through "a new and living way" provided by a kind and beneficent Father.

GRADUAL PROCESS OF REVELATION

Every man passes through three stages of development. He is first an infant, then a child or youth, and finally attains maturity. Responsibility increases correspondingly as man's ability enables him to grasp more knowledge. What is true of each individual is also true of the body (or world) of mankind, which is composed of individuals. The social structure of humanity had its infancy, childhood and maturity. Knowledge must be gained on an ascending scale, so revelation which conveys knowledge must be bestowed on the same basis. In God's dealings with mankind, that system of religion which He endorsed, was always best adapted to man in his condition at the time, but it was also intended to fit and prepare him for reception of a fuller revelation to follow.

In fitting the world for the crowning act in which His judgment and mercy would meet, and the kingdom of heaven with its reconciling grace become a reality, God permitted the world to pass successively into three great dispensations: the Patriarchal, Jewish and Christian. Sometimes these are called, not inappropriately, the starlight, moonlight and sunlight ages, because in each succeeding one the light of truth gleamed a great deal brighter. Another age may be inserted between the second and third, and designated the twilight age. It would cover the preparatory period beginning with the announcement, by John the Immerser, of the impending kingdom, and close with the

accession to the throne and coronation of our Lord. However, as the twilight is not in itself an official time of the day, but a blending of two conditions, so the world was made ready to transfer from the receding glory to the full effulgence of grace.

A word of caution needs to be inserted at this juncture. Any such designations as given above are arbitrary and serve only as matters of convenience. The great majority of mankind were not under the second, or Jewish Dispensation, at all. This pertained to the descendants of but one man, Abraham. The rest of the world remained under the Patriarchal Dispensation from its inception until the gospel was proclaimed at the house of Cornelius, by Simon Peter. It is for this reason the word "age" is not so appropriate as the word "dispensation." Since age signifies "duration" it would be impossible for two ages to run concurrently, although two dispensations may do so. Thus for 1500 years the Israelites were under the Jewish Dispensation, the while the rest of humanity continued under the Patriarchal form.

The plan of God was gradually unfolded to the world as man was able to grasp it. It was "precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little, there a little" (Isa. 28:13). "The Kingdom of heaven is as if a man should scatter seed upon the ground, and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he knows not how. The earth produces of itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. But when the grain is ripe, at once he puts in the sickle, because the harvest is come" (Mark 4:26-29). In such progressive steps man was made increasingly aware of "the eternal purpose of God" (Eph. 3:11). But even when Christ came, he was forced to say to the apostles, "I have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now" (John 16:12). Nothing is a mystery unto God, for "known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world" (Acts 15:18). But it was not until the Christian Dispensation that He made known "the mystery of His will, according to the purpose which He set forth in Christ, as a plan

for the fulness of time" (Eph. 1:9, 10).

SCHOOLS OF THE AGES

All instruction must be dispensed in proportion to the ability of the student to absorb it. We first send our children to the primary school, next to the elementary, and then to the high school. But each of these prepares the student for the next, and all prepare him for a better and more wholesome life. The principles gleaned in the primary school govern the child through high school and later existence. Responsibility increases as the student learns. We hold a high school student accountable for much more than one who is in the kindergarten.

In like manner God's educational process for the world involves three schools. From Adam to Moses, mankind was enrolled in the primary department, then certain chosen students were given elementary training, and now all are admissible to the high school over which Jesus is superintendent, and in which the textbook has been perfected by heaven. Our responsibility is greater now than that of the Jews who studied in the elementary school (Cp. Heb. 10:28, 29; 12:25).

But the principles established in former dispensations remain the same. Laws change and requirements are altered. But these are only enabling acts by which we are made more keenly aware of existing principles, and are better equipped to adapt them to our own wellbeing. The return to God of sinful man, the reconciliation to Him who made us and gave us being, these depend upon a disclosure of the divine will to man, an intelligent perception by man of that revelation, and humble submission unto its demands. Fortunately for those of us who now live, the things which happened in prior days, "were written down for our instruction, upon whom the end of the ages has come" (1 Cor. 10:11). Thus, as we investigate the nature of religion which restores man to the grace of God, we cannot

ignore "the first principles of God's Word" given to bring the world to the state of spiritual maturity which it should now occupy.

NATURE OF RELIGION

Just as "the sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath" (Mark 2:27), so religion was made for man, and not man for religion. Religion is to cure and heal a diseased condition, and just as a remedy is not needed where there is no disease, no system for restoration to God's grace was required while man existed in the divine favor. Religion manifests itself in two departments; what God has done for us, and what God requires that we do for ourselves. The first provides proper motives to stimulate the second.

Inasmuch as sin offends God as our king, by dishonoring and insulting his majestic laws, no religion can be acceptable which does not propitiate or atone for guilt. The mere atonement for sins committed would not, however, in and of itself establish reunion, so it must have the added value of reconciliation for the offender to the offended. And since this could not be fully accomplished so long as the effect of sin, or sense of guilt remained in the conscience, there must be a feature of provision for the expiation of sin, which gives a full realization of pardon and restoration, so the sinner need not longer fear or hide himself in shame.

Sin alienates man from God. And just as a foreigner cannot dictate to a sovereign state the grounds upon which he will accept citizenship, but as the sovereign proposes the terms upon which the foreigner will be accepted for citizenship, so it is in the kingdom of heaven. Man, alienated from God, is not left to specify the terms by which he will come to God, nor are the conditions revealed by heaven the result of mere caprice or opinion. They are part of a divine system, which is the result of

an eternal purpose. Man cannot dictate the laws by which he shall return to God. "There is one lawgiver and judge, He who is able to save and to destroy" (James 4:12).

Absolute justice demands satisfaction for every sin. Sin must be expiated, or the guilty sinner must die. Expiation implies sacrifice, and this is the basis of all religion. This is true whether the religion be pagan or Christian, superstitious or rational. Sacrifice for sins constitutes a scarlet line running through God's entire revelation, from the expulsion of the first man Adam from the Edenic paradise to the death of the second man Adam upon the cross. But sacrifice demands an altar, and an altar demands a priest. Sacrifice, altar and priest— these three are the fundamental requirements of religion, and the entire word of God is given over to a revelation concerning these three items in three Dispensations. It is true that with each change of dispensation there came also a change in the priesthood (or should we state it in reverse order?) "When there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well" (Heb. 7:12). But changing priesthoods and changing laws did not abrogate these three essentials in either. Thus, even though we are more vitally concerned in a study of priesthood, we cannot divorce it from its basic relationship to sacrifice.

The Element of Sacrifice

Contents

If no man had ever sinned, no sacrifice would ever have been offered. If no sacrifice had been required no priest would ever have served. "For every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices" (Heb. 8:3). "Every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of a man in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins" (Heb. 5:1). The study of priesthood is inextricably interwoven with that of sacrifice. One cannot ignore the foundation and erect a proper structure. Yet he cannot spend so much time on the foundation as to neglect the remainder of the structure. Our consideration of the element of sacrifice in religion as revealed by our Father, will be limited to a necessary survey as a basis for further study of the priesthood of God.

The idea of sacrifice in religion is as universal as religion itself, and thus indicates the universality of the recognition of sin and the need for expiation of it. From what source did this universal idea spring, which pervaded the thought of the cultured and untutored, the civilized man and savage alike? We believe that this universal idea is a convincing proof of the common origin of all nations of mankind, and of the revelation of God to the original parent stock from which all men came. That religion is a universal part of man's existence is undenied; that sacrifice is an element in this universal concept must be admitted. What was its origin?

We have but two alternatives. It was either revealed to

man or he arrived at the concept by a process of his own reasoning. This last is assumed by the learned skeptics, who are divided into two groups, those who affirm that the idea of sacrifice originated in superstition and is an invention of credulous men; and those who assert that it is an offspring of the natural sentiments of the heart.

To the believer in God neither of these can come as a satisfactory explanation. That sacrifice was not a product of man's philosophy based upon superstition is evident from the fact that God never approves as an act of worship directed unto him, that which he designates as will-worship. He instructs as follows: "See to it that no one makes a prey of you by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ" (Col. 2:8). He condemns as of no value those things which "have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting rigor of devotion and self-abasement" (Col. 2:23). But God did approve religious sacrifices offered unto him. With reference to the first such sacrifice recorded, it is stated, "And the Lord had regard for Abel and his offering" (Gen. 4:4). Since God never accepted as an act of devotion to himself that which originated in the superstition of men, it is obvious that the offering of sacrifice was not a product or device of superstitious ignorance.

That the idea of sacrifice did not proceed from the natural emotions and sentiments is demonstrable by the fact that no one can conceive of a connected chain of ideas by which man could arrive at the notion that slitting the throat and burning the body of an innocent animal would expiate the sin of the one who did the killing. By what inductive or deductive reasoning could man arrive at such a conclusion? Reasoning consists of the act of combining two known facts in such a manner as to produce a third and new fact, called a conclusion. What would be the established major and minor premises by which mankind universally, and in diverse circumstances, would unanimously arrive at such a conclusion? Would not primitive man, guided

solely by reason, be more likely to feel that one who sinned and then slew an innocent victim only added to his guilt by such action?

The ancient Greek philosophers who soared to the heights of logic confessed their utter astonishment at the prevalence of animal sacrifice and freely admitted they could not account for it upon any rational grounds. They agreed that man could not by any chain of thinking conclude that the practice would be pleasing to the Deity. If then, the idea of killing an innocent victim could not be discovered by the light of nature or arrived at by logical thought processes, and since God would not accept what originated as mere superstition, but did accept, acknowledge and approve animal sacrifices, such sacrifices must have been by revelation of the divine mind.

The universality of sacrifice can be accounted for in the fact that all nations proceeded from the sons of Noah. "These are the families of the sons of Noah according to their genealogies, in their nations; and from these the nations spread abroad on the earth after the flood" (Gen. 10:32). Sacrifice was taught by their common ancestor. "Then Noah built an altar to the Lord, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar" (Gen. 8:20). But Noah only followed the practice of his antediluvian fathers.

The institution of sacrifice is not mentioned by Moses in his account of man's history. Abel was the first man of whom it is recorded that he offered a blood sacrifice. However, there may be an intimation that God taught Adam and Eve to slay animals in sacrifice for we read that "the Lord God made for Adam and his wife garments of skins, and clothed them" (Gen. 3:21). Animals were not used for food until after the flood (Gen. 9:3), yet they were divided into clean and unclean categories before this (Gen. 7:2). That this division was based upon use in sacrifices is shown by Genesis 8:20. It is possible then that God showed Adam how to inflict death upon the animal victims and

clothed the original pair with the skins of these animals. The Hebrew term for "atonement" is *copher* and it means "to cover." Did God cover the nakedness and shame of Adam and his wife to indicate the purpose of sacrifice or atonement?

In Hebrews 11:4, we learn that "By faith Abel offered unto God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain through which he received approval as righteous, God bearing witness by accepting his gifts." There are four important facts revealed here relating to Abel's sacrifice. (1) It was offered by faith, (2) It was acceptable to God, (3) Through it he received approval as righteous, (4) God accepted his gift, thus bearing witness of his approval in the divine favor. Would God accept as an act of religious exercise, approve as righteous one who performed the act, and bear witness to such righteousness by acceptance of gifts, in a matter which he had not authorized? Is it not an undeniable principle that divine authority is always essential to any acceptable worship?

Moreover, faith is the belief of testimony. Where there is no testimony there can be no faith. If Abel offered an acceptable sacrifice by faith, he must have acted upon testimony. But only the testimony of God could define what is acceptable as worship to God. "Faith comes by hearing the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). We are forced to the conclusion that the idea of sacrifice emanated from God, and was revealed to fallen man as a means of expiation for his sin, and a propitiation of God.

DEFINITION OF SACRIFICE

Alexander Campbell defined sacrifice thus: "In its literal and primary acceptance, it is the solemn and religious infliction of death upon an innocent and unoffending victim, usually by shedding its blood! Figuratively, it means the offering of anything, living or dead, person, or animal, or property to God." This definition meets our present requirements, and is therefore

adopted for this volume.

Sin produces death. That which expiates sin must be that which produces life. "For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement, *by reason of the life"* **(Lev. 17:11). For this reason, "under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins" (Heb. 9:22). But an inferior cannot atone for a superior, so "it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins" (Heb. 10:4). The sacrifices of ages past were but types and shadows of the one great sacrifice, of which it is written, "But when Christ had offered for all times a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God" (Heb. 10:12).**

It was by virtue of this sacrifice that our Lord is frequently referred to as "the lamb of God." It was not because of his patience or humility, nor because of His life. He is called a lamb in respect to His death. His example of humility and his teaching could not expiate sin. Only by the shedding of blood could this be accomplished. When John the Immerser introduced Him it was as "the Lamb of God *who takes away the sin of the world"* **(John 1:29). In Revelation, the writer says "I saw a Lamb standing as though it had been slain" (Rev. 5:6). In Him, priest and sacrifice met as one. "As it is, He has appeared once for all at the end of the age to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb. 9:26). As we study the priesthood and sacrifices of yesteryear, let us do so with but one objective, a better understanding of the priesthood and sacrifice of Him who has introduced us to "a better hope by which we draw nigh to God." The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office; but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever (Heb. 7:23, 24).**

Patriarchal Priests

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In the revelation of God pertaining to the first age of the world, we have no lengthy theological discussions as to the nature of God, or the basis of his requirements for acceptable homage. Rather we have a rehearsal of events, of acts and facts. From these we gain our first lessons as to the character of God and His expectations of men. We learn about God by what He did. "In the beginning God created the heaven and earth." We learn about acceptable worship by observing the practice of those who engage in it. Nowhere are we given elaborate instruction concerning the introduction of sacrifice. No formal dedication, no grand presentation, marked its beginning. Had God not desired to inform us of the first murder, we would have perused the brief history of centuries without knowing that men were ministering at altars.

And we must depend for our knowledge of the priesthood of the patriarchal dispensation chiefly upon those bits of information directly connected with deeds performed. Of one thing we can be sure and that is that the principles governing intercourse with God are the same in all ages. Man must believe and obey to be acceptable with God. He may not be required to believe the same things, nor do the same things in all ages, but whatever God testifies he must believe and acting upon that faith he must obey whatever God requires of him. The eye can only respond to the light that is available, but it must respond to that if in a healthy state. A good man in every age is the same. He is

one who fulfills his obligations to God and his fellowmen as God requires of him.

Originally every man was his own priest. Incongruous though this may seem, each was his own mediator. As he stood at the altar he represented one approaching unto God in behalf of his other self— his sinful being. Such a course was essential in the infancy of the world, for as it was once right for a man to marry his own sister to establish the race, it was right for him to act as his own priest to inaugurate the spiritual system. Abel was his own priest, and so was Noah, Abraham and Isaac.

As men multiplied and families expanded, the oldest male member approached God in behalf of the others. In this simple age of time, when the world was new and men had to learn much by experience, age was the chief qualification, for it provided opportunity for greater wisdom. When children married, and lived adjacent to the father's holdings, he still sacrificed in behalf of their increasing progeny. Of such a character was the patriarch Job, for while his sons all had houses of their own, "Job would send and sanctify them, and he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings according to the number of them all" (Job 1:5). In this manner the patriarchs served in behalf of tribes or clans composed of their own descendants.

Upon the death of the father, by right of primogeniture, the firstborn son succeeded to his office as priestly mediator at the altar. It was on this basis that Esau was designated not only immoral, but *irreligious,* when he sold his birthright for a single meal (Heb. 12:16). To despise the birthright was to despise the solemn and sacred obligation toward God, which was enjoined by it. This also enjoined upon the father a responsibility of handing on to his children the sacred traditions of God, for which cause God said of Abraham "I have chosen him, that he may charge his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice." (Gen. 18:19). Righteousness pertains to our responsibility to God;

justice to our responsibility toward our fellowmen. These two constitute the basis of all "religion that is pure and undefiled before God and the Father . . ."

Despite the dimness of the Starlight Age, it is possible to detect the pattern for future service unto God of a more elaborate nature. The occasions of the ministrations of the patriarchs in their priestly role are very informative. Let us glance briefly at some of the types of sacrifices.

(1) Thank offerings. In this category was the sacrifice of Noah when he came forth unto a world purged from sin by baptism in water. "And when the Lord smelled the pleasing odor, the Lord said in his heart, I will never again curse the ground because of man" (Gen. 8:21).

(2) Sin offerings. That the sacrifices of Job were of this nature is evidenced by his own expression as to his reason for making the burnt offerings. "For Job said, 'It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts'" (Job 1:5).

When God became incensed at the three "friends" of Job and declared they had not told the truth about Him, he instructed them, "Now therefore take seven bulls and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job will pray for you, for I will accept his prayer not to deal with you according to your folly; for you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has" (Job 42:7, 8). In this the role of expiatory sacrifice and mediatorship are clearly portrayed.

(3) Vow or dedication offerings. When Jacob was enroute to Haran, and slept all night at Luz, using a stone for a pillow, he was enabled to see a vision of God. The next morning "he took the stone which he had put under his head and set it up for a pillar and poured oil upon the top of it . . . Then Jacob made a vow" (Gen. 28:18). Years later Jacob came to the same place and

set up a pillar of stone "and poured out a drink offering on it, and poured oil on it" (Gen. 35:14). In conjunction with this incident, it is worth observing that Jacob commanded his household and all who were with him, "Put away the foreign gods that are among you, and purify yourselves, and change your garments" (Gen. 35:2). It is quite generally agreed among scholars that the purification was by washing. Is this the forerunner of the ceremonial ablutions which were later practiced? If so, did it stem from a belief that God had cleansed the earth by water at the time of the flood? Some celebrated scholars believe this to be the case.

No study of the patriarchal sacrifices would be complete without special reference to God's confirmation of His promise to Abram. Upon the momentous occasion when it is said that Abram believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness, Abram asked assurance that his seed should possess the land of Canaan. God told him to bring a heifer, a goat, a ram, a turtledove and a pigeon. Abram cut the animals in two and laid each half over against the other, but he did not cut the birds in two. Through the day Abram kept the birds of prey from the carcasses. After sunset, when it was dark, a smoking fire pot and flaming torch passed between the pieces, and God made a solemn covenant to give the land to the descendants of Abram, even defining the boundaries of their inheritance (Gen. 15:7-21).

It will be noted that the animals and birds mentioned were the only ones which were later appointed for sacrifices by Abram's posterity, therefore God confirmed His covenant in the blood of every clean beast and fowl appointed for sacrifice. This very solemn method of ratification is alluded to in Jeremiah 34:18, where the Lord declares, "And the men who transgressed my covenant and did not keep the terms of the covenant which they made before me, I will make like the calf which they cut in two and passed between its parts." The covenanting parties shed the blood of an animal, then split its body in two, placing the

parts opposite to each other with a sufficient distance between that they could walk in the space, whereupon they met and joined hands in the middle of the passageway. The significance of the symbol was that each said, in effect, "May I become like this animal if I break this covenant which we have made." That is why God said, "I will make them like the calf which they cut in two."

In the case of Abram, God was the party of the first part. He was represented by the visible symbols of a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch. Abram was the party of the second part. As the patriarchal priest, representing his entire posterity, he prepared the sacrifices, and unto him God certified the covenant. By such impressive methods did God reveal his promises and wishes unto the fathers.

But the priesthood in the Patriarchal Dispensation was not limited to the descendants of Abraham, nor to the blood line of the Messiah. Every ancient nation had its chosen priests long before the tribe of Levi was selected to minister in behalf of Israel. Melchizedek, who was king of Salem, was also priest of the Most High God, among the Jebusites (Gen. 14:18). Joseph married Asenath, daughter of the priest of On (Gen. 41:45). Moses married Zipporah, daughter of the priest of Midian (Ex. 3:1). The priests of Egypt were a recognized group supported from the king's treasury, for when Joseph was buying up the land of the famine-stricken inhabitants, "the land of the priests he did not buy, for the priests had a fixed allowance which Pharaoh gave them; therefore they did not sell their land" (Gen. 47:22).

Many of the nations, even as idolatry crept in among them, retained a fear of God as a heritage from the period before the days of Peleg, in whose generation the earth was divided (Gen. 10:25). Abraham was surprised to find a reverence for God in the heart of Abimelech, the Philistine king (Gen. 20:11). Pharaoh said of Joseph, "Can we find such a man as this in whom is the

Spirit of God?" (Gen. 41:37). Jethro, the Midianite priest offered a burnt offering and sacrifices to God, and engaged in fellowship with Aaron and all of the elders of Israel (Exodus 18:12). But when God separated and segregated the nation which he brought from the loins of Abraham, and committed his oracles unto them, the rest of the world without this advantage (Rom. 3:1, 2) became dependent upon tradition and conscience.

Summarizing what we have learned about the Patriarchal Dispensation, we mention the following facts: (1) God revealed a system of religion with sacrifice, altar and priest, which was family wide in its inception; (2) Burnt offerings and sin offerings in conjunction with vows and dedication of memorable places gave hint of the type of service acceptable unto God; (3) An intimation of the need of ceremonial purification by the offerer of sacrifice is seen; (4) The selection of priestly mediators was universal among the nations; (5) The principle of atonement by blood was firmly established; (6) The death of an innocent victim for guilty sinners was clearly recognized. Such lessons aptly pointed forward to the time when the nations universally would acknowledge the need of a perfect mediator, a perfect priest and a perfect sacrifice for sins. They gave portent of an event in which the blood of an innocent being would be shed for the sins of the world. Thus did God in the Patriarchal Dispensation lay a groundwork for future revelation, and the simple lessons in the primary department of the world became a shadow of good things to come.

There remains, before we close our investigation of the priesthood in the first age of humanity, an investigation of a being of special significance, who combined within himself the offices of king and priest. We shall turn our attention briefly to this unique character in the history of religion and mankind.

PRIESTHOOD OF MELCHIZEDEK

Abram and Lot, his nephew, who had been traveling together, agreed to separate in order to avoid strife over the pasturage, so essential to their immense herds of livestock. Lot chose to dwell in the fertile plains of Jordan, and removed his family to Sodom, one of five cities in the Vale of Siddim. These cities were attacked by four kings who formed a confederacy, and who were successful in carrying off as captives, the inhabitants of the five cities, including Lot. When Abram heard of this, he pursued after the marauders, rescued their captives and retrieved the spoils. Returning from the foray, Abram passed by Salem, and thus the stage was set for meeting Melchizedek.

"And Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought out bread and wine; he was a priest of God Most High. And he blessed him and said, 'Blessed be Abram by God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!' And Abram gave him a tenth of everything" (Gen. 14:18-20).

These three small verses of Scripture give us virtually all of the information we have in the Old Testament, relating to this patriarch. He is mentioned but once more, by David in Psalm 110:4, where God decrees that his Son shall be made a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. If it were not for the pointed allusions to him by the author of the New Testament book of Hebrews, we would be left to wonder at this Canaanite priest who pronounced a blessing upon the father of the Israelites, and to whom tithes were so respectfully paid.

WHO WAS MELCHIZEDEK?

A large volume could be written on the multitude of speculations concerning the identity of Melchizedek. Jewish tradition has always advanced the idea that he was Shem, who unquestionably was alive in the days of Abraham. The Targum of Jonathan says, "But Melchizedek, he is Shem, son of Noah,

king of Jerusalem." With this the Jerusalem Targum agrees. There are a great many valid objections to this Jewish speculation. (1) What reason could be assigned for not calling him Shem? Moses calls him Shem in every other place. Would he be likely to make such a radical departure from his regular procedure, without proper explanation accompanying the same? (2) It is hardly probable that Shem would be reigning as king in Canaan, for Abraham was "a sojourner in a strange land," in that area. Moreover, he was told to leave his father's house, *and his kindred,* **a thing he could hardly do if he came into a region over which an illustrious ancestor was a recognized monarch. (3) The apostle in Hebrews affirms that Melchizedek had no recorded father, mother or posterity. This was certainly not the case with Shem, whose lineage is easily traceable.**

Another prevalent conjecture is that Melchizedek was actually the Son of God. Those who dislike to make "the father of the faithful" subservient to any tribal king of his day, advance this idea. But this would make the Son of God a type of himself, for the apostle says, "Resembling the Son of God he continues a priest forever" (Heb. 7:3). It would hardly be logical to say that one resembled himself. Again we read, "Another priest arises in the likeness of Melchizedek." Such expressions preclude the idea that Melchizedek was the Son of God, for he would not be said to be in his own likeness, or after his own order. Moreover, the theory would make Jesus both a king and priest before His death, contrary to all Scriptural teaching on the subject.

We hold the conviction that Melchizedek was a man who was invested with both the offices of king and priest, and as such was a divinely used instrument, introduced into the sacred history of the first age that he might be re-introduced into the history of the last age, to demonstrate the superiority of an enduring priesthood over a temporary one. For this very reason, the Holy Spirit, shrouded his life in mystery, giving no clue as to his progenitors or posterity, allowing no insight into predecessors or successors. He appears on the sacred page in his

full glory as monarch and mediator, he pronounces a blessing upon the father of the faithful and receives from him a tenth of the spoils he has taken. And since "it is beyond dispute that the inferior is blessed by the superior" (Heb. 7:7) it is evident that the priest who is made after the order of Melchizedek will be superior in office and dignity to one who proceeds from the loins of Abraham.

In the primary age of the world God introduces us to a brief preview of a priesthood more glorious than that authorized from Sinai. Melchizedek met Abraham with bread and wine to provide physical sustenance. Our great high priest made after the same order met the children of faithful Abram with the same elements but consecrated them to a constant reminder of His sacrificial death. Abram paid tithes to Melchizedek because of his priestly relationship to God. "One might even say that Levi himself, who receives tithes, paid his ancestor when Melchizedek met him" (Heb. 7:9, 10). But here we must bid farewell to Melchizedek and the patriarchal dispensation in which he lived, to revert to a more thorough study of his priesthood when we have completed our investigation of that of Levi, or Aaron.

The Nation of Israel

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The Patriarchal religion was adapted to the spiritual needs of men at a time when the world was divided into families, tribes or clans. But when tribes multiplied, and came together to live a composite existence, something new was required. All of the provisions of God were made for the ultimate benefit of the whole earth. This required the coming of the Savior to offer the Supreme sacrifice once for all. However, to preserve the world until that time, it was necessary to preserve the belief in the one true God. This could be a difficult task when the whole world was creating gods of every description. It could best be achieved by the selection of one people, their separation from others, and their continued segregation. Such a people would need a definite constitution, the basic law of which would be "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," in order that they could be called back to their original purpose when they wandered from it.

Accordingly when every nation had chosen its gods, the God of heaven chose a nation. As a preparatory step He went to the land of Chaldea, and called a man whose father and grandfather were already idolaters (Josh. 24:2). Demanding that this man separate himself from his father's house and all of his relatives, God promised to make him a great nation. Abraham "sojourned in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob" (Heb. 11:9). But nomadic life is poor training for a secure national existence, for nomads want to be ever on the move. They know but little about construction of

permanent cities, and resent any attempt to confine them for any length of time to a sedentary life.

Thus as a preparation for a strong national existence, the providence of God, removed the posterity of Abraham temporarily from the promised land. Making them slaves so they could not escape, He burnt out of their hearts the wanderlust which had been so much a part of their tribal existence, so that even when turned loose, they repeatedly tried to go back, choosing to endure slavery with its regular provisions of the fleshpots than a life in tents pitched in the wilderness. For several hundred years God allowed them to be confined in the most civilized nation of that day, and they were forced to learn the art of brickmaking, and labored in the construction of such storage cities as Pithom and Raamses (Exo. 1:11). Little did the Egyptian taskmasters realize that they were schooling unwilling apprentices whose posterity would erect some of the most beautiful structures ever constructed by human hands on the hills of Zion.

When the proper time had arrived, God directed Moses to go as his ambassador to the proud and haughty court of Pharaoh. The message was, "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, Let *my people* go!" Moses enforced his demands with a sufficient demonstration of power that the freed captives stood upon the other side of the Red Sea. Now began the tremendous task of welding this fearful, discouraged, murmuring host of once hopeless slaves into a cohesive nation which would preserve the greatest trust ever committed to any people thus far in history.

The first essential was a constitution which would act as a rallying point. The multitude was led to the foot of a high mountain which would serve as a speaker's platform for God. Here was given one of the most startling promises ever made. First God cited what He had done for them. "You have seen what I did to the Egyptians and how I bore you on eagles' wings

and brought you to myself" (Exo. 19:4). Then He declared, "Now therefore, if you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my own possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine, and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." (Exo. 19:5, 6). This implies God's intention of making them a nation of sanctified people, each of whom might serve as a priest in his own right. Citizenship in the kingdom would constitute admission to priesthood. Observe that this was contingent upon obeying God's voice and keeping His covenant. God proposed that this people who were "His own possession" should be so holy that He could speak and commune with each of them without an earthly mediator or intervening priest.

When God's proposition was placed before the people they gave unanimous consent to it. "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do." Moses was instructed to consecrate the people for two days, so that on the third day God could address them all in a body. The people were required to wash their garments. They were to abstain from all sexual congress. Nothing that would render them unclean or act as a distracting element was to be countenanced. Bounds were placed about the mountain and the instruction was issued, "Do not go up into the mountain, or touch the border of it. Whoever touches the mountain shall be put to death; no hand shall touch him, but he shall be stoned or shot, whether beast or man, he shall not live."

On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud settled upon the mountain. A loud trumpet blast caused the people to tremble. Suddenly the whole mountain quaked. The trumpet grew louder and louder. Then the voice of God came, giving the basic constitution of ten commandments. So frightened were the people that they stood afar off and shook. Then they appealed to Moses "You speak to us, and we will hear; but let not God speak to us, lest we die." Moses explained to them "God has come to test you, that the fear of Him may be before your eyes." But the people had enough. The heads of their tribes and their elders came to Moses

and pleaded with him, "Go near, and hear all that the Lord our God will say; and speak to us all that the Lord our God will speak to you; and we will hear and do it" (Deut. 5:27). They were not ready to dispense with an earthly mediator. God said to Moses, "I have heard the words of this people, which they have spoken to you, they have rightly said all that they have spoken. . . . Go, and say to them, 'Return to your tents!' But you, stand here by me, and I will tell you all the commandments and the statutes and the ordinances which you shall teach them."

While Moses was upon the mount to receive the sacred constitution the people demonstrated their unworthiness to act as a kingdom *of priests.* **They gathered themselves together to Aaron, and said, "Up, make us gods, who shall go before us." At the instigation of Aaron they took off their golden ornaments, and from the precious metal he formed a calf. An altar was erected before the image, "and they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play" (Exo. 32:6). When Moses returned with the national constitution on two tables of stone, and saw the calf and the dancing, he threw the tables out of his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain. He took the calf, burnt it, ground it to powder, scattered it upon the water, and made the people of Israel drink it. For once, they literally had a bellyful of idolatry!**

Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said "Who is on the Lord's side? Come to me." The sons of Levi gathered themselves unto him. Moses instructed them to take their swords and go through the camp slaying everyone they met. Three thousand men fell that day. (With the introduction of the law three thousand died; with the introduction of the gospel three thousand were saved. Truly the first brought death, while the second is "the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus.") Moses said to the tribe of Levi, "Today you have ordained yourselves for the service of the Lord, each one at the cost of his son and of his brother; that He may bestow a blessing upon you this day"

(Exo. 32:29). The holy nation and the kingdom of priests had failed in two great crises. They could not stand to hear God speak directly, when He tested them; and they had rebelled against the cornerstone of their constitution— the first and second commandments. They must have an earthly mediator and a special priesthood. The ideal of God would reach its fruition in another and a better age.

The Priesthood of Levi

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Prior to the formal appointment of the tribe of Levi to offer sacrifices in behalf of Israel, there were men among them recognized as priests by the congregation. When the people were gathered at Sinai to receive the law, the Lord said, "And also let the priests who come near to the Lord consecrate themselves, lest the Lord break out upon them" (Exo. 19:22). These special priests may have been the firstborn sons of the Israelites, for they had been told previously to consecrate all of these unto the Lord (Exo. 13:2, 15). In any event they were young men who served in this capacity, for Moses "sent young men of the people of Israel, who offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the Lord" (Exo. 24:5). They corresponded to "the young men" who were specially ordained in the church to minister in temporal matters (Acts 5:6, 10).

In the instructions given to Moses for the construction of the tabernacle, God said, "Then bring near to you Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the people of Israel, to serve me as priests— Aaron and Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar" (Exo. 28:1). The priesthood being changed, there was made of necessity a change of the law (Heb. 7:12). No longer could an Israelite offer sacrifices as in the previous dispensation. The tribe of Levi was consecrated to God in behalf of the entire congregation. The Lord killed the firstborn of every home in Egypt to purchase redemption for Israel. For this reason he demanded in return the firstborn of

every family in Israel. Then he adopted the tribe of Levi instead of the firstborn of all the tribes, thus guaranteeing the separation of the tribes until the Messiah came. God said "Behold, I have taken the Levites from among the people of Israel instead of every firstborn that opens the womb among the people of Israel. The Levites shall be mine, for all the firstborn are mine; and the day that I slew all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, I consecrated for my own all the firstborn in Israel" (Num. 3:11-13).

Levi had three sons: Gershon, Kohath and Merari. Aaron was of the family of Kohath. Only Aaron and his direct descendants could be priests (Num. 3:3). The rest of the descendants of Gershon, Kohath and Merari constituted the Levites. God said, "Bring the tribe of Levi near, and set them before Aaron the priest that they may minister to him. They shall perform duties for him and for the whole congregation before the tent of meeting, as they minister at the tabernacle; they shall have charge of all the furnishings of the tent of meeting, and attend to the duties for the people of Israel as they minister at the tabernacle. And you shall give the Levites to Aaron and his sons; they are wholly given to him from among the people of Israel. And you shall appoint Aaron and his sons, and they shall attend unto their priesthood; but if anyone else comes near, he shall be put to death" (Num. 3:5, 10). All priests were Levites, but not all Levites were priests. We are especially interested in the service of the priests.

QUALIFICATIONS OF PRIESTS

1. *Genealogical.* **The priest had to be a lineal descendant of Aaron, and be able to establish the fact from the official records. After the Babylonian captivity there were certain claimants to the honor who "sought their registration among those enrolled in the genealogies, but they were not found there, and so they were excluded from the priesthood as unclean; the governor told**

them that they were not to partake of the holy food, until there should be a priest to consult Urim and Thummim" (Ezra 2:62, 63). The Urim and Thummim were set in the breastplate of judgment which the high priest wore.

By looking into them he could determine God's judgment on any matter. The words mean "lights" and "perfections" and signified the perfect light by which the high priest could ascertain God's will in any matter of dispute.

2. *Physical.* **A priest had to be physically perfect, that is, possessed of all members of the body, with each properly proportioned. One who was blind, lame, mutilated or blemished in any fashion could not minister at the altar. Such a person could be sustained by the priest's ration, but was not allowed to participate in the services (Lev. 21:16-23). No priest was permitted to shave off the edges of his beard or to make any cuttings in his flesh (Lev. 21:5). At the same time, the high priest was not to let the hair of his head hang loose (Lev. 21:10).**

3. *Marital.* **A priest was not permitted to marry a widow, a divorcee or a prostitute. He could marry a virgin provided she was not a foreigner (Lev. 21:7, 13, 14). It appears that a later provision permitted him to marry the widow of another priest (Ezek. 44:22).**

4. *Social.* **When Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, offered unholy fire before the Lord, they were killed (Lev. 10:1, 2). At this time God said to Aaron, "Drink no wine nor strong drink, you nor your sons with you, when you shall go into the tent of meeting, lest you die; it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations. You are to distinguish between the holy and the common, and between the unclean and the clean" (Lev. 10:8-11). Were Nadab and Abihu under the influence of liquor when they took the wrong kind of fire for the incense? Such drinking was forever afterward barred to those who officiated at the sacred rites.**

The high priest could not go in to any dead body nor come in contact with any corpse (Lev. 21:10). One of the common priests could assist in the preparation and burial of the body of his father, mother, son, daughter, brother or virgin sister (Lev. 21:1-3). Even so, he became ceremonially unclean and was not permitted to minister in any of the holy things for seven days (Ezek. 44:26).

ORDINATION OF PRIESTS

Even though men possessed the qualifications they could not serve in the priestly office until formally ordained. Moses was told with reference to Aaron and his sons to "anoint them and ordain them and consecrate them, that they may serve me as priests" (Exo. 28:41). The consecration ceremony is fully described in Exodus 29 and Leviticus 8. We cannot here give a detailed description. Every such ceremony should have a dual purpose. It should deeply impress the incumbents with the sacredness, dignity and seriousness of the office, and at the same time lead the people to a deep respect for a ministration authorized of God and affecting so minutely their welfare and interests. Some of the outstanding items connected with the consecration follow.

1. A sin offering was provided to enforce the need for expiation of guilt (Exo. 29:1). Thus is illustrated the declaration that "the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests," and such men must offer sacrifices, first for their own sins and then for those of the people (Heb. 7:27, 28).

2. The appointee was then stripped of his old garments and his whole body washed with water (Lev. 29:4).

3. The robes of office were then placed upon him after which there was an anointing with oil. In the case of the high priest the oil was poured on so copiously that it ran down upon his beard, even "running down on the collar of his robes!" The

common priests had the oil sprinkled upon them. Truly, he who was high priest was "anointed with oil above his fellows."

4. Blood was applied to the tip of the right ear, and upon the thumb of the right hand, and the great toe of the right foot of each priest. From henceforth the priest was to belong wholly to God, from head to foot. He was to hear nothing except what God wanted him to hear, do nothing God did not want him to do, and go nowhere God did not want him to walk. He was sealed with the blood of the sacrifice and as such was "God's man."

5. The period of consecration lasted for seven days. Among the Jews, the number seven indicated perfection or completeness. Thus the priests were to be wholly dedicated unto the service of God, fully consecrated before they began their ministration in behalf of others.

While Aaron and his sons were in the process of being consecrated, the altar was likewise being sanctified. "Seven days you shall make atonement for the altar and consecrate it, and the altar shall be most holy; whatever touches the altar shall become holy" (Exo. 29:37). The word for atonement, when applied to persons means "to expiate or atone for," but with regard to things, it has the significance of "purging, cleansing, purifying." After this solemn initiation into divine service the altar not only was sanctified to God's use, but possessed the divine warrant to impart sanctity unto any offering placed upon it. To this our Lord alluded when he said to the Pharisees and scribes, "You blind men! Which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred?" (Matt. 23:19).

FUNCTIONS OF LEVITICAL PRIESTHOOD

"At that time the Lord set apart the tribe of Levi to carry the ark of the covenant of the Lord, to stand before the Lord to minister to him and bless in his name, to this day" (Deut. 10:8). This indicates a three-fold responsibility: (1) The care of the

tabernacle and sacred furniture; (2) Ministration in service pertaining unto God; (3) Pronouncing the divine blessing upon the congregation. This agrees with the statement of the Lord to Aaron, "You shall attend to the duties of the sanctuary, and the duties of the altar, that there be wrath no more upon the people of Israel . . . and you and your sons with you shall attend to your priesthood for all that concerns the altar and that is within the veil, and you shall serve. I give your priesthood as a gift, and any one else who comes near shall be put to death" (Num. 18:5, 7). To this also the New Covenant in its references to the Levitical priesthood gives assent. "Every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins" (Heb. 5:1). "These preparations having thus been made the priests go continually into the outer tent, performing their ritual duties" (Heb. 9:6).

RITUAL DUTIES

So multitudinous were these duties, and of such a variety, that a large volume could be filled with their enumeration and description. Time would fail us to speak of all of them, so we must content ourselves with but a small number.

1. At the consecration of Aaron "fire came forth from before the Lord and consumed the burnt offering and fat upon the altar, and when all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces" (Lev. 9:24). The expression "from before the Lord" means from the Most Holy Place, where the Shekinah, or glory of God dwelt and was manifest. This fire divinely kindled was to be kept alive by refueling. "The fire on the altar shall not go out" (Lev. 6:12, 13). It was coals of this fire which had to be used in burning incense (Lev. 16:12), so when Nadab and Abihu "offered unholy fire before the Lord, such as he had not commanded them" (Lev. 10:1), fire came out from before the Lord and struck them dead.

2. Each day the priests were to offer two male lambs. In this daily sacrifice one lamb was offered at the third hour of the morning, that is 9 o'clock; the other at the ninth hour of the afternoon, that is 3 o'clock (Num. 28:3-6). It became traditional for the congregation to assemble for prayer at the time of these sacrifices (Acts 3:1) and they abstained from eating and drinking until after the morning sacrifice was offered (Acts 2:15). On the sabbath these sacrifices were doubled, two lambs being offered each time (Num. 28:9, 10). The servile work necessary in presenting these sabbatical sacrifices gave occasion for our Lord's remarks as recorded in Matthew 12:5.

The Israelites based their religious observances on the lunar calendar. Accordingly, the priests were to offer special sacrifices to inaugurate each month. As soon as the silver trumpet sounded the appearance of the new moon, the month was officially opened with burnt offerings (Num. 28:11-16). These are the "new moons" mentioned in Colossians 2:16. Other regular sacrifices were made in conjunction with the three great annual festival occasions. In every case of sin, the guilty person was required to present a sacrifice before the priest, who then slew it in conformity with the ordinance.

3. The priest also acted as a judge in many instances. This was true in cases involving homicide, legal rights, or assault, where the testimony was not clear. The Israelites were instructed that, "in any case within your towns which is too difficult for you, arise and go up to the place which the Lord your God will choose, coming to the Levitical priests and the judge who is in office in those days, you shall consult them, and they shall declare to you the decision" (Deut. 17:8, 9). Such a decision was final and could not be altered. "You shall be careful to do according to all that they direct you; according to the instructions which they give you, and according to the decision which they pronounce to you, you shall not turn aside from the verdict which they declare to you, either to the right hand or to the left" (Deut. 17:10, 11).

False accusers were to receive summary discipline. "If a malicious witness arises against any man to accuse him of wrongdoing, then both parties shall appear before the Lord, before the priests and the judges who are in office in those days; the judges shall enquire diligently, and if the witness is a false witness, and has accused his brother falsely, then you shall do to him as he had meant to do to his brother; so you shall purge the evil from the midst of you."

One of the most interesting and peculiar decisions in which the priest assisted pertained to a woman whose husband suspected she was guilty of carnal relationship with another man. The priest took holy water in an earthen vessel, and mixed it with dust scraped off the tabernacle floor. The woman was forced to drink the water, and if she was guilty of unconfessed crime, the water caused intense abdominal pain which was accompanied by bodily swelling and other symptoms. An innocent woman suffered no such ill effects. The record declares, "This is the law in cases of jealousy" (Num. 5:29).

The priest was to determine when a man had contracted leprosy. Anyone who had an indication of the disease was to be examined and isolation was the fate of those afflicted. When one was pronounced unclean by the priest, he was compelled to wear torn clothing, let the hair of his head hang loose, cover his upper lip, and cry, "Unclean, unclean" when anyone approached. He was banished from his home and forced to dwell outside the camp (Lev. 13:45). Often such unfortunates dwelled in tombs as the only available shelters. If the disease ran its course and the leper believed himself to be free from its ravages he could present himself to the priest who made a thorough investigation. If the man proved to be free of the disease he performed a ritual for ceremonial cleansing and return to society (Lev. 14). It was because of this requirement that Jesus commanded the leper whom he had physically cleansed, "Go and show yourself to the priest, and make an offering for your cleansing as Moses commanded for a proof to the people" (Luke 5:14).

4. Aaron and his sons were to superintend the tabernacle. When the signal was given to march they dismantled the tabernacle, covered all of the articles of furniture, and prepared them for transportation. Then the Kohathites came near and the priests assigned to each man his task and his burden. They did the same for the Gershonites and Merarites who were charged with the actual transportation of all the essential equipment from place to place. Later, when the temple was built, the priests lived round about it as guards. They also opened the building every morning (1 Chron. 9:27). The utensils of service had to be carefully checked in and out, the spices had to be mixed for the incense, and the showbread baked every sabbath (1 Chr. 9:28-32). These tasks fell to the priests.

DAY OF ATONEMENT

Special mention needs to be made of this great day, which was observed annually on the tenth day of the seventh month. This month was ushered in with a festival of trumpets. The first day was to be observed as a day of solemn rest, a memorial day (Lev. 23:23-25). This is the great Jewish New Year still observed by Jews throughout the world.

Beginning at sunset on the ninth day of this month, the day of national expiation was ushered in to be observed until the close of the following day. It was the only day of fasting specifically commanded the Jews by the Old Testament, and during this entire day they were to partake of no refreshment, but rather "afflict their souls" (Lev. 23:27). Luke refers to it in Acts 27:9. Upon this fateful day the high priest entered the holy of holies. No common priest was ever permitted to enter this sacred apartment, and even the high priest was restricted to this occasion as a representative of the nation (Lev. 16:2). He was required to select a young bullock for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering. Divesting himself of his rich robes of office, he donned white linen clothing, for on this day he stood upon an

equality with others, being forced to offer for his own sins as well as for those of the people.

He then took two goats for a sin offering for the people, and after presenting them before the Lord, he placed two pieces of gold in a small box. On one appeared the words "For the Lord," and on the other "For Azazel" which is translated "scapegoat" in the King James Version. The pieces of gold were drawn out and placed upon the heads of the goats. The one upon which the Lord's lot fell was destined to be slain.

The high priest killed the bullock for his own sins and caught the blood. He then filled the golden censer with coals of fire from the altar and put incense upon them. This incense created a fragrant smoke which veiled the mercy seat. Then the high priest sprinkled the blood with his finger before the mercy seat seven times. Then coming out, he killed the goat for the sins of the people, and took its blood into the most holy place and sprinkled it upon and before the mercy seat.

Afterwards the goat which remained alive was brought, and the high priest confessed over it all the iniquity and transgressions of Israel, putting them upon the head of the goat which was then sent away into the wilderness by a man in readiness (Lev. 16:21). It is said, "The goat shall bear all their iniquities upon him to a solitary land." (Lev. 16:22). Then the high priest went into the tent of meeting, took off his linen garments, bathed his body in water, and put on his ministering garb and continued the ritual activities demanded. The writer of Hebrews makes numerous references to this day of atonement, of which he says, "Into the second only the high priest goes, and he but once a year, and not without taking blood which he offers for himself and for the errors of the people. By this the Holy Spirit indicates that the way into the sanctuary is not yet opened as long as the outer tent is still standing (which is symbolic for the present age)" (Heb. 9:7-9).

A Copy and Shadow

Contents

We must not forget our original premise that in each dispensation, God prepared mankind for the reception of greater revelations in succeeding dispensations. We live in the final age of the earth. The apostle declares that those things which happened to God's ancient people "were written down for our instruction, upon whom the end of the ages has come" (1 Cor. 10:11). Again he states, "For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope" (Rom. 15:4). We should be deeply grateful as we read of the priesthood of the past ages that "God had foreseen something better for us" (Heb. 11:40).

It is a proof of the divinity of the Bible that it contains a shadow or likeness of a substance or body which did not yet exist. To have a shadow, three things are required: a substance, a light, and a reflection. We cannot create a shadow from a non-existent substance. Only God could create a shadow first, then bring into existence the substance, so that the light of truth directed against it would reveal the exactness of the shadow. The service of the Old Covenant priesthood constituted a type of our service and sanctuary in the Christian era. "They serve as a copy and shadow of the heavenly sanctuary, for when Moses was about to erect the tent, he was instructed by God, saying 'See that you make everything according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain'" (Heb. 8:5). "For Christ has

entered not into a sanctuary made with hands, a copy of the true one, but into heaven itself" (Heb. 9:24). "These are only a shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ" (Col. 2:17). As the substance is superior to a shadow, so is the present system superior to that which preceded it.

But since a reflection bears a resemblance to that which it shadows, so may we learn of God's plan and purpose by studying the former priesthood. The record thereof is a part of those former things written for our instruction. We propose a few suggestions along this line to encourage the student into greater research in God's former revelation.

THE HIGH PRIEST IN TYPE

The high priest of the Old Covenant foreshadowed Christ. Both were specially called of God to their positions. "One does not take the honor upon himself, but he is called by God, just as Aaron was. So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him, 'Thou art my Son, today have I begotten thee.'" (Heb. 5:4, 5). There could be but one high priest at a time under the Levitical regime, there can be but one high priest any time during this dispensation. "He holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever" (Heb. 7:24).

Both Aaron and Christ were ordained to serve in behalf of others in matters pertaining unto God. Aaron was vested with special robes of office, created for glory and beauty. Isaiah pictures our Lord as "glorious in his apparel, marching in the greatness of his strength" (Isa. 63:1). When the seer upon Patmos beheld him, he was clothed with a long robe and with a golden girdle about his breast (Rev. 1:13). The ancient high priest had written across his mitered brow "Holiness to the Lord." When the conquering Christ appeared to John, he portrayed him thus, "On his head are many diadems; and he has

a name inscribed which no one knows but himself. He is clad in a robe dipped in blood and the name by which he is called is The Word of God . . . On his robe and on his thigh he has a name inscribed, King of kings and Lord of lords" (Rev. 19:12, 13, 16).

When the high priest served in his mediatorial robe, he bore upon his breast and next to his heart the names of all of the tribes in whose behalf he officiated. Their names were upon the onyx stones on his shoulders and in the precious stones upon his bosom. Just as he could never forget those whose care weighed heavily upon him, and for whom he interceded before the mercy seat, so our high priest carries a sympathetic understanding of all our needs. "For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sinning. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:15, 16).

Aaron began his public ministry by being washed, the act being performed by Moses. Our Lord began his personal ministry by being washed in the waters of baptism, the immersion being performed by John the Immerser. Aaron was anointed with oil which was poured upon him so generously that it ran down upon his beard and the collar of his coat. The lesser priests were anointed with the same oil but not in such a measure. Even so our Lord was anointed with the Spirit sent down from heaven. It was this anointing which "Christed" him, and it was not given to him by measure (John 3:34).

In his official capacity Aaron was a mediator, standing between God and the people. Now "there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5). Aaron was also a judge, and by the aid of the Urim and Thummim, he could render a perfect decision from which no appeal could be made. The apostle declares that God "has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by

a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all men by raising him from the dead" (Acts 17:31). Jesus said, "The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son" (John 5:22).

The high priest secured atonement for all of the nation. It was he who took the blood into the holiest of all, and there behind the veil, sprinkled it before the mercy seat. This had to be repeated annually. "But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent, he entered once for all into the Holy Place, taking not the blood of goats and calves but his own blood, thus securing eternal redemption" (Heb. 9:11, 12). "Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the Holy Place yearly with blood not his own; for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the age to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

It is observable that on the day of atonement the high priest was forced to carry out the ritual alone. "There shall be no man in the tent of meeting when he enters to make atonement in the holy place" (Lev. 16:17). Our high priest also was bereft of all help in his great sacrificial atonement for the world. There was no friend to aid. His response as made by the prophet was, "I have trodden the wine press alone, and from the peoples no one was with me" (Isa. 63:3).

We must not forget that it is impossible for that which is weak and finite to perfectly portray that which is perfect. Consequently there must be discrepancies in the comparison of the priesthoods, and points of contrast as well as of similarity. Some of these are mentioned by the sacred writers. The ancient high priests became such by fleshly descent, but of Christ it is stated, "Who has become a priest, not according to a legal requirement concerning bodily descent but by the power of an indestructible life" (Heb. 7:16). Again, those who formerly

became priests took their office without an oath, but this one was addressed with an oath, "The Lord has sworn, and will not change his mind, Thou art a priest forever" (Heb. 7:21). Then, too, the former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office; but he holds his priesthood permanently, "because he continues forever" (Heb. 7:23, 24).

THE COMMON PRIESTS

The priests associated with Aaron were typical of all Christians, associated with our great high priest in the service of God. Every Christian is consecrated and sanctified as a priest, there are many priests. Besides these there are no other priestly orders recognized by heaven. There can be no hierarchical distinctions in the church. Every priest of God is of equal dignity in the divine arrangement. There is no distinction between a clergy and laity.

The common priests of the Old Covenant were all sons of high priests. Their priesthood grew out of their relation to him. They became priests because they were born into his family. Thus it is in this dispensation. We are priests of God because of our relationship to Christ and for no other reason. We become priests by being born again. Those steps which are required to make us sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty, introduce us into the priesthood. There was no priesthood for Aaron's descendants separate and apart from his priesthood, there is none for us out of Christ. It is only as he lives in us and we live in him that we become a kingdom of priests unto God.

In many respects the consecration of Aaron and his sons was alike. They were made partakers of the same ritual for sanctification in their priestly functions. In like manner our Lord "though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the

form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men." (Phil. 2:6, 7). "For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified have all one origin. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brethren" (Heb. 2:10). Accordingly, some of those features required to begin the personal ministry of our Lord are requisite to introduce us to our ministration as priests. We, too, must be washed in the waters of baptism, and the gift of the Spirit is made to us upon completion of this initiatory rite (Acts 2:38; 5:32). Certainly we do not receive the measure of the Spirit as poured out upon Christ, but we are anointed with the Spirit as sons of God (Gal. 4:6).

The ancient priests required first a blood sacrifice before they could be consecrated. The same holds true for ourselves. They were required to put off their old garments; we are required to "hate the garment spotted by the flesh" (Jude 23). They were required to be completely washed in the laver; we must submit to "the washing of regeneration" (Titus 3:5). They were adorned with robes of glory and beauty; we are to "Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness and patience" (Col. 3:12). They received an application of the anointing oil when washed; we are saved "by the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit, which he poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior" (Titus 3:5, 6).

The priests of the former dispensation were made such by obedience to the commands of God. Moses could not originate, devise or invent ceremonies, rituals, or modes of induction. At the very outset "Moses said to the congregation, 'This is the thing which the Lord has commanded to be done'" (Lev. 8:5). Nothing else would have been accepted or recognized by heaven. Those who were introduced by some other form would never have been accepted or recognized as priests. In a like manner, those who today have not been baptized into Christ can never be accepted as priests of God. Only God can stipulate those terms by which men may approach unto him in acceptable service. No

substitutionary measures will be allowed to stand.

The Old Covenant priests were ordained to serve and not to be served. They were set apart to minister and not to be ministered unto. Every priest of God, sanctified to his service, was expected to engage actively in that service. The priests did not hire a substitute to officiate in their places. Priesthood conferred a special personal obligation to minister unto God and to others. This obligation grew out of relationship to the sanctuary and to God. True, the priests did not all do the same thing at the same time, but they did in turn whatever service was required and whatever fell their lot at any given time. It is said of Zechariah "Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty, according to the custom of the priesthood, it fell to him by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense" (Luke 1:8, 9). Is there not a lesson in this for God's priests today to qualify themselves to do anything required in the service of God, when it may fall their lot to do it? Aaron and his sons were ordained to "serve God as priests" (Exo. 28:1), and not to be served. Unless God's people today personally minister unto him as priests they void his plan, and defeat his eternal purpose.

The blood of the sacrifice was applied to the extremities of each priest. It was placed upon the tip of his right ear, on the thumb of the right hand, and on the great toe of the right foot. This dedicated the whole body to God. From this time forward he was "God's man." It was not enough that the sacrifice be killed and the blood shed. That blood had to be applied to each individual. Thus it is also with God's priests. The blood must be applied to each heart. "For if the sprinkling of defiled persons with the blood of goats and bulls and with the ashes of a heifer sanctifies for the purification of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God" (Heb. 9:13, 14). It is in view of this that the record declares, "Therefore, brethren, since we

have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus . . . let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water" (Heb. 10:19, 22). The Christian is God's man. He belongs wholly unto God. "You are not your own; you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body." (1 Cor. 6:19, 20). A Levitical priest met death if he forgot the sanctification of the blood. "How much worse punishment do you think will be deserved by the man who has spurned the Son of God, and profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and outraged the Spirit of grace?" (Heb. 10:29.)

The most holy place was a type of heaven. Into it only the high priest went, "and he but once a year, and not without taking blood which he offers for himself and for the errors of the people. By this the Holy Spirit indicates that the way into the sanctuary is not yet opened as long as the outer tent is still standing" (Heb. 9:7, 8). The holy place before the curtain represents the church. It was here the common priests ministered. "The priests go continually into the outer tent, performing their ritual duties" (Heb. 9:6).

In the outer tent stood the table containing the bread of the Presence. There were twelve loaves, one for each tribe. This bread could be eaten only by the priests, and had to be eaten in the tent. It was changed once every seven days, and was eaten at that time. The Lord has a table in his church today. It contains the bread of His Presence. There is but one loaf upon it, because there is no longer any tribal distinction. "Thou wast slain and by thy blood didst ransom men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and hast made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on earth" (Rev. 5:9, 10). "Because there is one loaf, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the same loaf" (1 Cor. 10:17). The hallowed bread can only be eaten by God's priests, by Christians. It is wrong to offer it to those who have not been sanctified by obedience to the commands of God. It is to be eaten by God's priests once every

seven days. In the primitive church the disciples met together upon the first day of the week to break bread.

The only source of light in the tabernacle was the golden lampstand. It consisted of a center shaft which supported three branches or divisions on either side. These received their strength from their attachment to the center shaft. In all there were seven lamps, the number seven signifying perfection to the Jews. There is but one source of light in the church, the Word of God. It is a perfect light. The testimony concerning Christ as given by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John constitutes the center support. The three divisions of God's revelation previously given all point forward to Christ. Christ said, "These are my words which I spoke to you, while I was still with you, that everything written about me in *the law* **of Moses and** *the prophets* **and the** *Psalms* **must be fulfilled" (Luke 24:44). The three divisions following: history, epistolary and prophecy (Acts, epistles and Revelation) all point backward to Christ. Destroy the center shaft and all would fall. It was the duty of the priests in the Mosaic dispensation to attend to the lamps daily. They were to** *see* **that these lamps were always prepared to shine brightly, and that they were "set up so as to give light upon the space in front of it" (Lev. 25:37). The priests of God now should daily attend unto the study and proclamation of God's Word. This was true in the primitive church. "Every day in the temple and at home they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ" (Acts 5:42).**

The golden altar also stood in the holy place. Upon it incense was burnt to send up a sweet odor before the mercy seat of God. The incense was burnt every morning and every evening (Exo. 30:7, 8). In Revelation 5:8 we read of "golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints." The psalmist entreated, "Let my prayer be counted as incense before thee, and the lifting up of my hands as an evening sacrifice" (Psalm 141:2). Surely God's priests in this age should minister daily at "the golden altar"; for we are instructed, "Through him then let

us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name" (Heb. 13:15).

It is with reluctance we conclude this chapter. We are fully aware that we have not plumbed the depths of God's great typical institution, and shall be content if, having scratched the surface, we may encourage the reader to dig ever deeper, and like the husbandman of the parable "of his treasure bring forth things new and old." We stand lost in wonder and amazement at the spiritual negative from which the perfected picture has been developed, especially when we contemplate that the negative was made before the body existed to be photographed. When the body was at last brought into existence, the negative was shown to be a perfect reproduction. "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning."

A Profane Priesthood

Contents

"Her prophets are wanton, faithless men; her priests profane what is sacred, they do violence to the law" (Zeph. 3:4). The writer of the Hebrew letter asserts that the high priest under the Mosaic law could "deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness" (Heb. 5:2). Speaking of our Lord, it is affirmed, "He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people" (Heb. 7:27).

The human weakness of the priests was early manifested in their career. Perhaps the first defection in their religious ministration came about when Nadab and Abihu "each took his censer, and put fire in it, and laid incense on it, and offered unholy fire before the Lord, such as he had not commanded them" (Lev. 10:1). Their sin was that of substitution of something else for what God had specified as essential in worship. As a result they were divinely disciplined, and fire came from the most holy place to devour them. The intimation is that they were under the influence of intoxicants and thus in a confused mental state in which they could not distinguish "between the holy and the common, and between the unclean and the clean." In any event, the sin was as inexcusable then as it is now. The punishment of their dereliction was so startling that it had a sobering effect upon the remaining priests. However, as generations drifted by, the priests fell victim to their own lusts, and exercised an evil influence upon the congregation.

When Eli was priest, his sons "were worthless men, they had no regard for the Lord" (1 Sam. 2:12). They were covetous and greedy. A custom had been introduced that when a man offered a sacrifice, the servant of the priest would come with a three-pronged fork in his hand which he would thrust into the kettle or pot of boiling meat. All that the fork brought up the priest appropriated for his own consumption. Too, the priest's servant demanded of those who sacrificed a choice piece of raw meat for roasting with the fat still attached. Inasmuch as the law demanded that all of the fat be burnt, and none be eaten, the offerer might protest, saying, "Let them burn the fat first and then take as much as you wish," whereupon the reply would be made, "No, you must give it now; and if not, I will take it by force." As a result, "the sin of the young men was very great in the sight of the Lord; for the men treated the offering of the Lord with contempt" (1 Sam. 2:12-17).

Added to these faults were grave immoralities, for the priests engaged in illicit intercourse with the women who served at the entrance to the tent of meeting. So flagrantly notorious was this crime, that Eli said, "Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil doings from all the people. No, my sons; it is no good report that I hear the people of the Lord spreading abroad." However, they paid no attention to the remonstrance of their father, and a prophet was sent to Eli with the fateful news of the loss of the priesthood to his posterity.

The words of the man of God were very significant. "Why then look with greedy eye at my sacrifices and my offerings which I commanded, and honor your sons above me by fattening yourself upon the choicest parts of every offering of my people Israel . . . Behold the days are coming when I will cut off your strength and the strength of your father's house, so that there will not be an old man in your house. Then in distress you will look with envious eyes on all the prosperity which shall be bestowed upon Israel; and there shall not be an old man in your house for ever. The man of you whom I shall not cut off from my

altar shall be spared to weep out his eyes and grieve his heart; and all the increase of your house shall die by the sword of men. . . . And I will raise up for myself a faithful priest who shall do according to what is in my heart and in my mind; and I will build him a sure house, and he shall go in and out before my anointed for ever. And every one who is left in your house shall come to implore him for a piece of silver, and a loaf of bread, and shall say, 'Put me, I pray you, in one of the priest's places, that I may eat a morsel of bread'" (1 Sam. 2:29-36).

In view of the above, George Bush, Professor of Hebrew and Oriental Literature, New York City University, says in his *Notes on Leviticus:* **"Aaron was succeeded by Eleazar, his eldest surviving son, after the death of Nadab and Abihu, and it continued in his family through seven generations, till the time of Eli. On his death it was removed from that branch for the wickedness of Eli's sons, and given to the descendants of Ithamar, Aaron's other son. In the time of Solomon it returned again into the line of Eleazar, in which it continued till the Babylonish captivity. Jeshua, the first high priest after the return of the Jews, was of the same family; but after his time the appointment became very uncertain and irregular; and after Judea became a Roman province, no regard whatever was paid to this part of the original divine institution. The office was in fact in process of time so far desecrated in the general corruption, that it was often sold to the highest bidder, whether of the family or not; and so things continued, till finally the nation had filled up the measure of its iniquities, and priest, altar, and temple were all swept away in the abolition of the Jewish economy and the dispersion of the race." (pp. 73, 74).**

The decadence of the priesthood is easily traceable in the sacred scriptures, and this condition is assigned as one of the basic reasons for the grievous transgressions which resulted in the exile of the people to Babylon. As early as chapter 17 of Judges we read of a young man of the tribe of Levi contracting to be a priest for a family at a stipulated salary of ten pieces of

silver, a suit of clothing and his living on an annual basis. "And Micah installed the Levite, and the young man became his priest, and was in the house of Micah. Then Micah said, 'Now I know that the Lord will prosper me, because I have a Levite for a priest'" (Judges 17:12, 13). The fact that he expected to officiate before both a graven and molten image did not seem to trouble the mercenary Levite. Later when a group of marauders from the tribe of Dan were stealing the household gods the "priest" enquired as to their intentions. "And they said to him, 'Keep quiet and put your hand upon your mouth, and come with us, and be to us a father and a priest. Is it better for you to be priest to the house of one man, or to be priest to a tribe?' And the priest's heart was glad; he took the ephod, and the teraphim, and the graven image, and went in the midst of the people" (Judges 18:18-20). He had received a call to pastor a larger church!

By the time of Isaiah, stern indictments were hurled against the profligates. "The priest and prophet reel with strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in giving judgment" (Isa. 28:7). Jeremiah declared, "An appalling and horrible thing has happened to the land: the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule at their direction; my people love to have it so, but what will you do when then end comes?" (Jer. 6:31). With the prophets erring in their vision, and presenting false messages, and the priests by their direction stumbling in giving judgment, conditions became ever more serious for God's people. The condition was augmented by virtue of the fact that the people preferred smooth prophecies to the real truth. They were willing to support men who taught error and reassured them that God's vengeance would not come, but they starved the occasional faithful bearer of heaven's real message. "For from the least to the greatest of them, every one is greedy for unjust gain; and from prophet to priest, every one deals falsely. They have healed the wound of my people slightly saying 'Peace, peace,' when there is no peace" (Jer. 6:13, 14). So brazen had they become that the word says they were not only unashamed, but actually

did not know how to blush.

Their religious leaders acted in collusion to maintain their mercenary positions. "Both prophet and priest are ungodly, even in my house have I found their wickedness, says the Lord. Therefore their way shall be to them like slippery paths in the darkness, into which they shall be driven and fall; for I will bring evil upon them in the year of their punishment, says the Lord" (Jer. 23:11, 12). The faithful Jeremiah warned, "Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you, filling you with vain hopes; they speak visions of their own minds, not from the mouth of the Lord. They say continually to those who despise the word of the Lord, 'It shall be well with you,' and to everyone who stubbornly follows his own heart, they say, 'No evil shall come upon you.'" Apparently the religious teachers were willing to provide whatever the people were anxious to hear, if they were well paid for it. It was a case of "like people, like priest" (Hosea 4:9).

Almost without exception the men of God who were sent to declare the burden of God's people, included the priests in their condemnatory pronouncements. Micah said, "Its priests teach for hire, its prophets divine for money; yet they lean upon the Lord and say, 'Is not the Lord in the midst of us? No evil shall come upon us.'" (3:11). It needs to be remarked that God had provided for the sustenance of his priests. They were entitled to a portion of the offerings made upon the altar. "Do you not know that those who are employed in the temple service get their food from the temple, and those who serve the altar share in the sacrificial offerings?" (1 Cor. 9:13). The condemnation by Micah was not because the priests were financially supported in teaching, but because they had professionalized the God-given task and were doing so because of the money they got for it. No longer satisfied to trust in God and their brethren to supply them with voluntary gifts at the altar, they were now hiring themselves out for wages and teaching for gain. It is not injurious to say that the apostle declares in the verse following

the one where he reasons that the priests get their food from the temple, "In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel" (1 Cor. 9:14). Will God be as certain to condemn those who today "teach for hire?"

Zephaniah referred to Jerusalem as a rebellious, defiled and oppressing city. He declared that she listened to no voice, accepted no correction, and refused to draw near to God. The reason may be found in his assertion that "Her officials within her are roaring lions; her judges are evening wolves that leave nothing until the morning. Her prophets are wanton, faithless men; her priests profane what is sacred, they do violence to the law." (Zeph. 3:3, 4). Malachi is especially stern. He accused the priests of lacking both respect and reverence. "A son honors his father, and a servant his master, 'If then I am a father, where is my honor? And if I am a master, where is my fear?' says the Lord of hosts to you, O priests, who despise my name" (Mal. 1:6).

God declares that his covenant with Levi was one of life and peace, given to him that he might fear. He affirms that "He feared me, he stood in awe of my name. True instruction was in his mouth, and no wrong was found on his lips. He walked with me in peace and uprightness, and he turned many from iniquity. For the lips of a priest should guard knowledge, and men should seek instruction from his mouth, for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts." That the priestly function had been prostituted from its original purpose is evident as the man of God continues, "But you have turned aside from the way; you have caused many to stumble by your instruction; you have corrupted the covenant of Levi, says the Lord of hosts, and so I make you despised and abased before all the people, inasmuch as you have not kept my ways but have shown partiality in your instruction" (Mal. 2:5-9).

As a result of the corruption and idolatry which engulfed

the inhabitants of Jerusalem they were carried into Babylon. Here, in a state of desperation, God burnt out of their hearts a love for other gods. At the end of seventy years they were released to return to Jerusalem where they labored arduously to restore the city and its walls. Among them were many priests and Levites as well as temple servants. The desire to follow the word of God is manifested in the fact, that when certain ones of the priests sought their registration among the genealogies, and could not locate their names, they were excluded from the priesthood as unclean. "The governor told them that they were not to partake of the most holy food, until a priest with Urim and Thummim should arise" (Neh. 7:65).

However, as generations passed on, the lessons were forgotten, and by the time our Lord was born the priesthood had become the pawn of crafty politicians. When Judea became a Roman protectorate, there was often a conflict between the Jews and their conquerors, so that sometimes two high priests were recognized at the same time. An indication of the unsettled state of affairs in this era is found in the account given by Josephus, who says: "When Cyrenius had now disposed of Archelaus's money, and when the taxings were come to a conclusion, which were made in the thirty-seventh year of Caesar's victory over Antony at Actium, he deprived Joazer of the high priesthood, which dignity had been conferred on him by the multitude, and he appointed Ananus, the son of Seth, to be high priest . . . Valerius Gratus . . . deprived Ananus of the high priesthood, and appointed Ishmael, the son of Phabi, to be priest. He also deprived him in a time, and ordained Eleazer, the son of Ananus, who had been high priest before, to be high priest; which office, when he had held it for a year, Gratus deprived him of, and gave the high priesthood to Simon, son of Camithus, and, when he had possessed that dignity no longer than a year, Joseph Caiaphas was made his successor. When Gratus had done these things, he went back to Rome, after he had tarried in Judea eleven years, when Pontius Pilate came as his successor."

The priesthood had been steered into evil waters. Thus it continued until the time appointed for the consummation of the Jewish state. The Roman army under Titus, encircling the walls of Jerusalem, drew the siege ever tighter, until the city fell in A.D. 70, and with the burning of the temple, altar, sacrifices and priest were taken from Judaism. A new day had dawned for the world, and their refusal to heed "the signs of the times" spelled doom for the Jewish people. A new high priest had been coronated in the heavens, a new mediator had been ushered in by blood. The time of which the prophets had spoken had finally arrived.

The Time of Reformation

Contents

"According to this arrangement, gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper, but deal only with food and drink and various ablutions, regulations for the body imposed until the time of reformation" (Heb. 9:9, 10). The apostle recognized that the ordinances of the Mosaic economy were only temporary. They constituted restrictions and restraints to hold a people in line until a better covenant based upon better promises could be introduced. That change which then took place involved "a change in the priesthood" and of necessity, "a change in the law as well" (Heb. 7:12).

Ample warning had been given of God that such a reformation was coming. Jeremiah had declared, "Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant which they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel, after those days, says the Lord; I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each man teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them, to the greatest, says the Lord" (31:31-34).

The coming age was to provide new leadership. Ezekiel was told to prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, who were accused of feeding themselves and neglecting the sheep. They were rebuked because they had not strengthened the weak, healed the sick, bound up the crippled, brought back the straying, and sought the lost, but had ruled with force and harshness. God declared, "I will save my flock, they shall no longer be a prey; and I will judge between sheep and sheep. And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the LORD, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them; I, the LORD, have spoken. I will make with them a covenant of peace and banish wild beasts from the land, so that they may dwell securely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods. And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will send down the showers in their season; they shall be showers of blessing." (Ezekiel 34:22-26).

There are numerous allusions in this highly figurative portrayal which should not be overlooked. The exploitation of God's people by their leaders was not to be tolerated. The flock of God was not created to provide food for those who fed them. God said, "Behold, I am against the shepherds; and I will require my sheep at their hand, and put a stop to their feeding the sheep; no longer shall the shepherds feed themselves. I will rescue my sheep from their mouths, that they be not food for them" (Ezek. 33:10). The shepherds condemned in Ezekiel are "the priests who teach for hire and the prophets who divine for money" as mentioned by Micah (3:11). Nothing can be clearer than the fact that God intended to wrest his flock from the grasp of mercenaries and hirelings.

This new regime was to be inaugurated when one shepherd was set up over them. The prophet identifies that shepherd as "my servant David." Since David was asleep with his fathers and his sepulcher was with them (Acts 2:29), when Ezekiel spoke, it is evident that the prophecy pertained to our Lord. Peter

declared in the very same connection, "This Jesus God raised up, and of that we are all witnesses" (Acts 2:32). Accordingly our Lord asserted, "I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will heed my voice. So there shall be one flock, and one shepherd" (John 10:16).

The characteristics of the new covenant are set forth. It was to be "a covenant of peace" (Ezek. 34:25). It was to provide security and safety from harm. Wild beasts were to be banished from the land that the sheep "may dwell securely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods." It was to secure liberty and freedom. "They shall know that I am the Lord when I break the bars of their yoke, and deliver them from the hand of those who enslave them" (verse 27). The gracious assurance is given, "'And you are my sheep, the sheep of my pasture, and I am your God', says the Lord God" (verse 31).

The evangelical seer, gazing into the future, and speaking as he was moved by the Holy Spirit, paints an unparalleled picture of the Christian dispensation. The walls of the city of God are to be called "Salvation" and the gates "Praise." The sun will no longer be needed for light by day, nor the moon at night. Instead the Lord will be an everlasting light, and God will be the glory of his people. Jehovah declares, "Your people shall all be righteous; they shall possess the land for ever, the shoot of my planting, the work of my hands, that I might be glorified" (Isa. 60:18-21).

Following this, Isaiah gives that noble declaration of the coming Christ, which Jesus personally read to the synagogue assembled in his home city of Nazareth, and of which he said "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (Isa. 61:1, 2; Luke 4:16-21). Then the prophet affirms that those who receive the "good tidings" which the Lord was "anointed to bring" will be called "oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified." These are destined for a work of restoration (61:4) and they shall "be called the priests of the

Lord, men shall speak of you as the ministers of our God" (Isa. 61:6). "All who see them shall acknowledge them, that they are a people whom the Lord has blessed" (verse 9).

Nothing is clearer than the fact that God's purpose was to make ministry and priesthood co-extensive in "the time of reformation." Every person who accepted the good tidings was to be a priest, every such person was to be a minister. Every priest was such because he ministered; every person was to minister because he was a priest. In priesthood and ministry all were to be of equal rank insofar as liberty, privilege and relationship to God are concerned. God's people were no longer to be a kingdom *with* priests, but a kingdom *of* priests; they were not to be a congregation *with* ministers, but a congregation *of* ministers. Priesthood was to be universal in the kingdom of heaven, ministry was to be mutual and reciprocal. This was to be the grand climax of the ages, the golden era of God's dealings with mankind.

God promised Israel that if they would obey his voice and keep his covenant they would be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation unto him. But they did not obey his voice nor keep his covenant. They never realized the fruition of the magnificent promise because they failed to meet the conditions. But God's purpose was not defeated. He created a new Israel of God (Gal. 6:16), made up of those who are Christ's, and are Abraham's offspring, and heirs according to promise (Gal. 3:29). Every one of these is a priest of God. By substituting those who are the children of Abraham by faith for those who were his children by flesh, God at last made every spiritual son of Abraham a priest. At last, every real Jew is a priest. "For he is not a real Jew who is one outwardly, nor is true circumcision something external and physical. He is a Jew who is one inwardly, and real circumcision is a matter of the heart, spiritual and not literal." (Rom. 2:28, 29).

To effect this great transformation there had to be a new

covenant, new altar and new sacrifice. Under the previous covenant only a limited priesthood could obtain. "If perfection had been attainable through the Levitical priesthood what further need would there have been for another priest to arise after the order of Melchizedek, rather than one named after the order of Aaron? For when there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well" (Heb. 7:11, 12). *There is a change in the priesthood!* **These are the words of inspiration. Since "the end of the ages" is come upon us, it is evident that God's plan of priesthood must reach its perfection in this dispensation, or his purpose be forever frustrated. Inasmuch as the latter is an unthinkable conclusion, it is apparent that in the functioning of every child of God as a priest, and only in that way, we see the perfected design of heaven carried out.**

The creation of any system which sets up a special class of priestly functionaries to minister in behalf of their fellows in things pertaining to God not only usurps the rights of the remainder of God's priests, but of even greater consequence, it does despite to the Spirit of grace, by introducing again a limited priesthood which can never produce perfection. Such a system has no more place under a faultless covenant than the burning of incense or animal sacrifices. Yet, the ambition of men's hearts for power and prestige is so prevalent, that a constant battle must be waged to keep an indifferent, indolent membership from surrendering their privileges and responsibilities to a group of professional worship directors who sell their talents and abilities for filthy lucre.

Under the Mosaic economy, the priests, and no one else could approach God's sanctuary. Yet those priests must come by the blood of the altar and the laver of baptism in order to enter the tent of meeting. It is still true that only the priests of God can participate in his service. But all who are in his congregation are priests. "Christ appeared once in the end of the age to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb. 9:26). "By a single offering

he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified" (Heb. 10:14). "Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way which he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water" (Heb. 10:19-22). Every one who has had the blood applied to his heart and who has been immersed in the laver of baptism is a priest with right of entrance into the sanctuary.

In the former dispensation every priest who was consecrated participated in God's service. One could not hire another. It is true that in that imperfect era the congregation could support priests to minister in their behalf, but that was because the congregation was not permitted to minister in the sanctuary. When King Uzziah "was strong he grew proud, to his destruction. For he was false to the Lord his God, and entered the temple of the Lord to burn incense on the altar of incense. But Azariah the priest went in after him, with eighty priests of the Lord who were men of valor, and they withstood King Uzziah, and said to him, 'It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the Lord, but for the priests the sons of Aaron, who are consecrated to burn incense. Go out of the sanctuary; for you have done wrong, and it will bring you no honor from the Lord God'" (2 Chron. 26:16-18). Uzziah was stricken with leprosy for his rashness. It is amazing that when men could not be priests they wished to be; and now that they can be they prefer to hire another to minister in their stead.

Even under the law one priest could not hire another. The priests were ordained to serve. Since every Christian is now a priest, it is certainly a travesty upon God's plan for a congregation of priests to hire another priest to minister in their behalf in things pertaining unto God. Such a procedure produces two evils. In the first place, it defeats the very purpose

of God as to priesthood by creating a sense of helplessness and dependency upon the part of the greater majority of his priests, and in the second place it creates a professional caste who serve for wages or hire. Thus the birthright of heaven is casually sold by one, and scornfully bought by another. If Simon the Sorcerer was condemned because he thought the gift of God could be *purchased for money,* **what will be the fate of those who think it can be** *sold for money?*

There is no priesthood in God's program now but that which is common to all Christians. That which makes one a Christian makes him a priest of God. The literal priesthood has been supplanted by the spiritual; the limited has been succeeded by the universal. Yet the religious world has been captivated by a special clergy. Designate it what you will, this is but a limited priesthood, arrogating to itself those rights which belong to all. Nothing is more certain than the fact that the average religionist believes that this special group of ministerial functionaries is a product of New Testament teaching. Yet it is apparent that the system which produces them is a denial of the very essence of the New Covenant and an espousal of the program of the Old Covenant. Those who seek justification for a special priesthood in this dispensation are also seeking to be justified by the law and are fallen from grace.

The time of reformation has come. It has brought with it certain changes. Those changes must be recognized. To deny them or abrogate them is to flout God's purpose.

1. There has been a change of sacrifice. The animal sacrifices once required are no longer demanded. To offer such sacrifices now would be to crucify the Son of God afresh and put him to an open shame.

2. There has been a change of law. No longer are we subject to the "regulations for worship in the earthly sanctuary" (Heb. 9:1). The law had "but a shadow of the good things to

come instead of the true form of these realities" (Heb. 10:1). The man who chooses to be justified by the law shows a preference for the shadow rather than the reality.

3. There has been a change of priesthood. The limited has given way to the universal. With the introduction of the priesthood of all believers, no particular class or caste has an exclusive right "to perform ritual duties." Indeed it is one of the absolute essentials to priesthood that each person who is a priest "have something to offer" (Heb. 8:3). The change in the priesthood has conferred upon all of God's priests the right to minister unto God subject to the restrictions of the Great King.

This great truth was recognized in the primitive church. "The devotional exercises of the Christian assemblies, like those of the Jewish synagogues, consisted principally of prayers, singing of hymns, and sacred discourses, founded upon positions of the Old Testament. Apostolic epistles were read in the congregation, to which they had been generally directed, but after a single reading they were generally laid aside. Every one who had power and the inclination to speak in public was allowed to do so with freedom" (A *History of the Christian Church,* **by Dr. Charles Hase. Pages 40, 41).**

The mystery of iniquity which began to work even during apostolic days soon changed this state of affairs, and wrested the rights from the many and gave them into the hands of the powerful few. This was done by recourse to the limited priesthood of the law as a pattern. Writing about conditions in the second century, our same learned historian, who was Professor of Theology in the University of Jena, says: "The offices of the Church at this period presented very little to excite the cupidity of ordinary men, and even the honor attending them was counterbalanced by the dangers. And yet it seemed desirable to increase the veneration which necessarily attends the virtues and a faithful performance of official duty in the Church, by mysterious forms of ordination, *by connecting them*

through various associations with the Old Testament priesthood, **and by external tokens of peculiar sanctity. The result was that even in the second century the priests (Kleros) were represented as the official mediators between Christ and the congregation (Laos). To speak in the church, and to administer holy rites, were conceded to be the special prerogatives of the clergy, although learned laymen were sometimes heard in the public assembly, with the consent of the bishop. In all things relating to the business of the congregation, the principal care and authority devolved upon the clergy, but this power was generally exercised mildly and with a true regard for the public good, since those who possessed it could use no external means of coercion, and the clergy, being generally** *without fixed salaries, were dependent upon the voluntary contributions of the people.* **Their authority was often much straitened by the influence of the confessors, and** *the idea was not yet removed of a priesthood embracing all true Christians"* **(Ibid., pp. 57, 58).**

From the foregoing, it is apparent that one of the first steps to the formation of a special clergy was the denial of the freedom to every one who had the power and inclination to speak in public. Although, for prestige and pride a learned layman was sometimes given the privilege of being heard in the public assembly, "to speak in the church was conceded to be the prerogative of the clergy." Yet, the rise of the clergy to dominant power was temporarily restrained by the fact that they were generally without stipulated salaries, and dependent upon voluntary contributions; as well as by the lingering concept of a priesthood of all believers. However, the surrender of the freedom to address the brethren by those who had the ability and desire to do it, into the hands of a special group of ministrants, was the seed from which the clergy sprung, and soon the guaranteed wage for serving God in behalf of men was introduced, and with it passed away the real function of the priesthood of all believers, and a *limited priesthood* **once more came into vogue. It is not amiss to state that the clergy system and the financial guarantee always go hand in hand.**

When the members of the church become so indolent and wrapped up with worldliness that they no longer study the holy scriptures, when they become so indifferent to the needs of their brethren that they no longer seek to excel to the edifying of the church, when freedom means so little that they will gladly surrender it to pamper pride, they begin automatically to try and purchase that for which they are not willing to exert personal effort. And when men demand professional ministers there will arise professional ministers to supply the demand. However, a system of universal priesthood can no more exist side by side with a system of limited priesthood, than we can be under the reign of grace and the Mosaic law at the same time. The professional ministry with its contracts to men cannot exist side by side with the mutual ministry growing out of a covenant with God.

We are living in "the time of reformation" of which the prophet spoke. The "end of the ages" has come. God's great ideal must reach its culmination in our lives. It is not for us to question whether his plan will work. It is but for us to work his plan. It is not for us to seek to improve upon his design or pattern, or through fear to shape, trim and alter it to meet our ideas, but to restore that pattern, firm in the conviction that he "who does not slumber nor sleep" will not fail us, but will attend us in our way.

At the root of almost every departure and apostasy is the pride of men. We are more afraid of what men will think about us than we are of what God thinks. We want to make a show, a demonstration, a manifestation of power, ability, and wealth. We worship culture and kneel as abject slaves at the shrine of conformity. The simple worship of the saints around the festal board has become a well-planned pageant, in which immaculate actors carry out a rigid formal ritual. The speaker's platform is not a stand in which humble farmers, mechanics or carpenters may exhort their fellow Christians to endure trials, overcome temptations and grow in grace, but it is a carpeted stage on

which a polished performer presents a perfected oration for which he has been personally prepared. We are more concerned about what our worldly friends think of "our minister" than we are as to what they think of God's Son. God's time of reformation is here; it is now time that our reformation begin.

The Order of Melchizedek

Contents

No study of the priesthood as set forth in the New Covenant would be complete without a knowledge of the high priesthood of Christ from which it stems, and no investigation of the priesthood of God's Messiah can afford to ignore the order upon which it is based. After Melchizedek appeared briefly on the scene of God's history in the days of Abraham, he disappeared without further mention until David records the words of God declaring that he would make his Son "a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek" (Psalm 110:4). Accordingly, when the writer of Hebrews desired to emphasize the superiority of the New Covenant to the Old Covenant, he had recourse to the diversity in the priesthoods of these respective revelations. He cites the prediction of David and directly applies it to the Son of God (Heb. 5:6).

In conjunction with the statement that Christ was "designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek" he continues, "About this we have much to say which is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing" (Heb. 5:11). This indicates that it is a difficult task to expound the truths concerning the priesthood of Christ to those whose hearing has become dull. The original word for "dull" means "lazy, sluggish, indolent, stupid." The word for "hearing" relates to the ability to perceive truth or grasp the force of reasoning. The occasion of the dullness of the Hebrews is assigned to the fact that they have not had "their faculties trained by practice to

distinguish good from evil." The result was that at the time when they should have been teachers they required someone to teach them again the first principles of God's Word.

We face today the same difficulty as did the writer of the Hebrew letter. The subject of God's priesthood falls upon ears that are dulled by inattention, traditionalism and prejudice. The average member of the church does not have his faculties trained to distinguish good from evil. Men, who long ago should have become teachers, must still have rudimentary principles explained to them over and over again. There is no limitation of the Holy Spirit's ability to explain, the limitation is upon the part of man to grasp. The limitation could be removed by the diligent application of the faculties through study. Trained faculties like trained soldiers are not produced by merely hearing textual lectures.

The inspired writer, although recognizing the difficulty did not demur from the task of explaining God's system of priesthood, and no more should we be discouraged by a kindred problem. Like him, we also should "desire each one of you to show the same earnestness in realizing the full assurance of hope until the end, *so that you may not be sluggish,* **but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises" (Heb. 6:11, 12). We shall proceed to an investigation of the order under which the priesthood of Christ was inaugurated. This will necessitate a careful study of Hebrews, chapter seven.**

In this chapter, there are a number of valid arguments introduced to establish the priesthood of Christ over that of the Levitical priests. The principal arguments are drawn from the following considerations:

1. Melchizedek was both king and priest, and his superiority in rank was acknowledged even by Abraham, the father of the Jewish race. Thus Levi who had not yet been born, could be said to have acknowledged this superiority

representatively through his illustrious ancestor, who paid tithes to Melchizedek.

2. Perfection was not attainable through the Levitical priesthood (verse 11) because "the law made nothing perfect" (verse 19). With the abrogation of the law because of its weakness and uselessness (verse 18) the better hope is introduced by which we draw nigh to God (verse 19) and the priesthood thus created would be superior to one based upon a law which could make nothing perfect.

3. The priesthood of the Old Covenant was not constituted with a solemn oath of God, but the priesthood of Jesus began in this august fashion. "This makes Jesus the surety of a better covenant" (verse 22).

4. The tenure in office of the former priests was uncertain and discontinued by death, making succession an imperative to the perpetuity of the system. In the case of our Lord a permanent, unchangeable priesthood is assured because he always lives to make intercession.

5. The priests of old were frail, weak, and sinful creatures, who had first to offer sacrifices for their own sins, before they could minister in behalf of the congregation. Our high priest is "holy, blameless, unstained, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens" (verse 26) and is superior in nature, character and attributes to those of the previous dispensation.

FACTS ABOUT MELCHIZEDEK

Verse 1. **His name Melchizedek means "king of righteousness." He was also king of Salem (Jerusalem) which word means "peace." He met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, as also recorded in Genesis 14:14-20.**

Verse 2. **Abraham apportioned to Melchizedek a tenth part of everything. This was done out of respect for the superior office of this man, and perhaps as an expression of thanksgiving unto God for the satisfactory culmination of the battle to rescue Lot and his goods, since Abraham recognized Melchizedek as a priest of God Most High.**

Verse 3. **Melchizedek is said to be "without father or mother or genealogy." This does not mean that he literally had no parents. The subject under consideration is the priestly function. No one was allowed to serve in the Jewish priesthood unless he could "trace his title clear" in the carefully guarded genealogical records (Cp. Ezra 2:62). We know the father of Aaron was Amram, and his mother was Jochebed. The record has preserved their names. We know that the sons of Aaron were Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. But no one knows the name of the father, or mother, or posterity of Melchizedek, because the record is silent on these matters.**

The expression that he "has neither beginning of days nor end of life" means simply that we have no historical record of his birth or death, or of the beginning or conclusion of his priestly office. The Jewish readers were ever anxious to trace *from the record* **the cessation of a man's priesthood, and determine his successor. But so far as the record is concerned one can determine no end to the priesthood of Melchizedek, and on that basis and as far as the record goes, that priesthood is continuous. No man can produce the record of its culmination.**

It is affirmed that "resembling the Son of God he continues a priest for ever." This does not mean we cannot trace the literal genealogy of Jesus, because we have two accounts given of it (Matt. 1 and Luke 3), but he had no genealogical record *as a priest* **such as the Jews required, and indeed his literal genealogical record showing he came from Judah would have made it impossible for him to be a priest on earth (Heb. 8:4).**

Melchizedek and Jesus resembled in the fact that each was a king as well as a priest; each was a king of righteousness and a prince of peace; neither had direct ancestors or successors in the priestly office and so far as the record shows both continued in office: Melchizedek because the record gives no account of his death; Jesus because the record attests that "he always lives."

Verse 4. **Abraham is designated "the patriarch" which means "chief father." In the reasoning of the Jews he would be superior in rank to any of his posterity, which would include the sons of Levi. Yet Abraham recognized the superior dignity of Melchizedek and manifested it by voluntarily conferring upon him a tenth of the booty taken in his foray against the retreating invaders.**

Verse 5. **Not all of Levi's descendants were priests, but those who did receive the priestly office were by the law commissioned to receive tithes from their brethren, as a recognition of the dignity of the office.**

Verses 6, 7. **Melchizedek who was not in the genealogy of Levi not only received tithes from the eminent father of the Jewish nation, but also blessed Abraham who had the promises. Since "it is beyond dispute that the inferior is blessed by the superior," these two items— the tithes bestowed** *by* **Abraham and the blessing bestowed** *upon* **Abraham— prove that Melchizedek was superior in rank not only to Abraham, but to any of his descendants in the flesh, none of whom could outrank their father.**

Verse 8. **The Levitical priests who received tithes soon had to forfeit their office, because they were mortal, and the record of their deaths is proof of the need of successors, but nowhere does** *the record* **indicate the cessation of the office of Melchizedek who took a tenth of the spoils from Abraham.**

Verses 9, 10. **Although Abraham, as patriarch, had the**

promises, he recognized the superiority of Melchizedek in his priestly office. He stood as a representative of that nation which would proceed from his loins, and the inspired writer points out the consequence of his voluntary act of deference. Although Levi had not yet been born, through Abraham his progenitor, it was as if he too paid tithes to Melchizedek, thus establishing the great fact that those mortal men who received tithes under the law were inferior to him who prior to the law was both king and priest. So the priesthood of the order of Aaron must be considered as inferior to that of the order of Melchizedek.

THE WEAKNESS OF THE LAW

Verse 11. **The Jews regarded their legal system as perfect and permanent. They reasoned that inasmuch as it had been personally announced by Jehovah under awe-inspiring conditions at Sinai, he would not repudiate his covenant. They overlooked the apparent fact that they had themselves nullified it by their disobedience. But that it could not produce perfection is here shown from the fact that if it did this would render unnecessary the coming of another priest who was not after the order of Aaron, which order was recognized and created by that law. Yet that another priest after another order must arise was attested to by the patriarch David in Psalm 110:4. Since a new priesthood could not improve on that which was already perfect, the necessity of a new one arising argued the weakness and imperfection of the one then in existence.**

Verse 12. **This verse renders a death blow to those who contend that we are still under the law given at Sinai. We cannot be under the priesthood of Christ and the law of Moses. If we are not under the priesthood of Christ, we are still under the law requiring animal sacrifices. If we are not under that law we are under a different priesthood than the one which that law produced.**

Verses 13, 14. **The argument of the inspired writer is clinched by the fact that Christ was not of the tribe of Levi, but of the tribe of Judah, in connection with which Moses said nothing about priests. If perfection were by the Mosaic law, it would be achieved under the Levitical priesthood. That it could not be so secured is evidenced from the prophecy that another priesthood would be inaugurated, and the one who became high priest under the new regime would be from a different tribe than the one authorized by law to furnish priests.**

Verses 15, 16, 17. **Our Lord became a priest "by the power of an indestructible life," and not as did the former priests "according to a legal requirement concerning bodily descent." The priests of the Mosaic dispensation were not inducted into their high office as a result of a proven character or guileless conduct. They were born into a certain family, and by virtue of legislation regarding that fleshly descent they became priests. The priesthood of Christ is more spiritual in nature, and is enduring and perpetual, being in that respect far superior to the Levitical priesthood.**

Verses 18, 19. **The former commandment was set aside because of its weakness and unprofitableness to secure the final great purpose of God, the salvation of man. The law answered the purpose for which it was intended, as "a custodian until Christ came" (Gal. 3:24). It was designed for that, and having been added because of transgression until the seed came, it did all it was intended to do. It was given to a limited number, for a limited purpose and a limited time.**

The law could not produce perfection (verse 11), nor purge the conscience from dead works, nor could it expiate sin. It was removed that a better hope could be introduced, by which we draw nigh to God. With such a high priest as we now have we can draw near with true hearts in full assurance of hope.

THE OATH OF OFFICE

Verses 20, 21, 22. **The third link in the chain of argument designed to prove the superiority of the Messianic priesthood over that of Aaron is the fact that Christ was confirmed in his office by an oath of God, whereas the former priests were inducted with appropriate ritualism upon the basis of mere legislative arrangement. When the time came for Aaron and his sons to be ordained, Moses was given simple and detailed instructions as to the consecration ceremonies. There was no extraordinary proceeding as may be seen by examination of the events described in Exodus 28.**

In the case of Christ, the Father declared with a solemn oath that the Son would be a priest for ever. Those who are sufficiently interested in the scriptural research necessary to determine the occasions upon which God employed an oath to confirm his word, will find that God never took such a solemn step unless he wanted to manifest the absolute certainty and immutability of his decrees. God's promise does not require an oath to make it binding. He will as readily fulfill his word unaccompanied by an oath, as he will that word attested by swearing an oath. But in matters of the gravest importance God employs an oath for our benefit. It is accepted universally among men that the highest form of attestation is by oath. "Men indeed swear by a greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation. So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he interposed with an oath" (Heb. 6:16, 17).

Since God employs an oath to demonstrate the unalterable character of his purpose, the fact that the Levitical priesthood was inaugurated without an oath is an argument that it could well be recognized as temporary and impermanent. The reverse is true concerning the priesthood of Christ relative to which it is affirmed, "God hath sworn and will not repent." When man

repents he changes his will; when God repents he wills a change. No change will be made in the present system of priesthood. It will never be superseded by another. So long as the priestly relationship is demanded in approach to God, it will be sustained in Christ Jesus. He will have no successor to his office.

The inspired writer declares that "this makes Jesus the surety of a better covenant." The word "surety" is from the Greek *egguos,* **and is nowhere else used in the New Testament, nor in the Septuagint. We cannot therefore arrive at its meaning by observing its usage by inspired writers. It is quite common in classic Greek, where it means "a bondsman or sponsor." It refers to one who pledges his property, his social standing, or his sacred honor that a certain thing will be carried out. If a man is apprehended by the law, he must give some assurance that he will appear in court. He is said to be "released on bond." The one who deposits the amount of money, securities or other negotiable interests to guarantee the appearance of the one arrested is called "the bondsman or surety." When one borrows money from a bank he must secure the name of other property owners as** *surety.* **Those who co-sign the note guarantee the payment of the borrowed sum.**

Jesus, by virtue of his office and the oath which confirmed it unto him, is our surety of a better covenant based upon better promises (Heb. 8:6). His sacrifice and death attest unto us that all of the promises of God will be fulfilled. His resurrection from the dead is a guarantee that "he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit which dwells in you" (Rom. 7:11). His present position as mediator and high priest in our behalf is a token that we may "with confidence draw near to the throne of grace" (Heb. 4:16).

THE PERMANENT PRIESTHOOD

Verses 23, 24, 25. **The argument for superiority as made in**

this section of Hebrews 7, is based upon the plurality of priests occasioned by death under the former dispensation, and the singularity and permanency of the priesthood of Christ Jesus.

The former priests were many in number, because of human frailty and mortality. Regardless of how excellent they might be in personal conduct, or how efficient in administration of ritual duties, death took its toll. From the time that the mantle was taken from the shoulders of Aaron and placed upon Eleazar until A.D. 70 when Phannias served as the final high priest, eighty-one men in order had ministered in the holy place. This is a sufficient commentary on the inspired statement "they were prevented by death from continuing in office."

How different it is with our Lord. "He holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues for ever." He has conquered death, and it holds no terrors for him. He is victor over it, and it cannot engulf him as it did the former priests. The superiority of his priesthood over theirs is as great as that of life over death, as immortality. He will not relinquish the priestly mitre to another brow. Upon the peaks of Mount Hor, "Moses stripped Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son; and Aaron died there on the top of the mountain" (Num. 20:28). No such scene will ever occur in the career of our great high priest.

The consoling thought to us is that "he is able for all time to save those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them." Man must draw near to God. He must do this through Christ. All who thus draw near he is able to save, and to do it for all time. This ability comes from the fact that he always lives to make intercession. He need not begin his work only to be forced to relinquish it to another. His ability is not circumscribed by liability to failure through death or deposition from office.

THE SINLESS CHARACTER

Verses 26, 27, 28. **The final argument is based upon the spotless nature and unsullied character of Christ Jesus as contrasted with the sinful nature of the former priests who had to offer sacrifices in their behalf.**

In view of the fact that we constitute "a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 2:5), "it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, blameless, unstained, separated from sinners, exalted above the heavens." He is separated from sinners in that he did not partake of their sins, enter into their plans, or succumb to their temptations. He was not segregated from them while on earth, for it was charged that "this man eateth with publicans and sinners," but his association with them was not to indulge in their carnal pleasures but to lead them into a purer life. Physically, he moved among them for their good; spiritually, he was separated from them lest he be evil. His present exalted position at the right hand of God enables him to further the work of intercession which he ever carries on in our behalf.

He has no need to offer sacrifices daily as did the former priests. Nor did he ever require a sin offering in his own behalf. He offered himself once for all and thus culminated sin offerings. Is this not a refutation of the doctrine of the Roman Catholic mass which is claimed by a deceiving priestcraft to be a daily sacrifice?

Answering the question, "What do you mean by the mass?" Conway says, "The mass, according to Catholic doctrine, is a commemoration of the sacrifice of the cross, for as often as we celebrate it, we show the death of the Lord until he come (1 Cor. 11:16). At the same time, it is not a bare commemoration of that other sacrifice, since it is also itself a true sacrifice because it has all the essentials of a true sacrifice: its Priest, Jesus Christ, using the ministry of an earthly representative; its victim, Jesus Christ, truly present under the appearance of bread and wine; its sacrificial offerings, the mystic rite of consecration." Again,

"Catholics hold that the infinite merits and efficacy of the sacrifice of the cross cannot be increased by any new sacrifice. The mass is not a new sacrifice, but the continuation of the bloody sacrifice of the cross applied in an unbloody manner to the souls of individual Christians."

If Jesus is a priest, and his body the victim, and he daily engages in its sacrificial offering, the Scriptures are at fault in declaring, "He entered once for all into the Holy Place, taking not the blood of goats and calves but his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption" (Heb. 9:12). What can be plainer than the following? "Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the Holy Place yearly with blood not his own; for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly, since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the age to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb. 9:25, 26).

The *priestcraft* **of Rome stands out here in direct contrast to the priesthood of heaven. In order to lend power to a human system, Rome changed the table of God into an altar, the supper into a sacrifice, the emblems into a victim. No longer could the communicants gather as a family around the household thanksgiving table; instead they must prostrate themselves as supplicants before an altar. And as altars and sacrifices must have their priests, so the hierarchy moved in to supply the daily need— always for the necessary remuneration, of course. How gladly should we receive the good news that "we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb. 10:10).**

The Royal Priesthood

Contents

The ideal of God for a kingdom composed entirely of priests is achieved in the relationship created by the new covenant. That which could not be accomplished at Mount Sinai has been accomplished at Mount Sion, where we received a kingdom which cannot be moved or shaken. Every child of God is a priest, every one is now a minister.

In the Revelation letter John informs us of Jesus "who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father" (Rev. 1:5, 6). This one statement tells us of the motivation (love), the action (freed us), and the means (his blood), by which Jesus achieved his goal of founding a unique kingdom.

Because of the priestly nature of the kingdom, celestial voices are raised in this hymn of praise:

"Worthy art thou to take the scroll

and to open its seals,

For thou wast slain and by thy blood

didst redeem men for God

From every tribe and tongue and people

and nation,

And hast made them a kingdom

and priests to our God" (Revelation 5:9, 10).

Let us examine the language of the Spirit. The terms "high priest" and "chief priest" are found 123 times in the new covenant scriptures. Of these occurrences, 113 directly or indirectly refer to the high priests or chief priests of Judaism.

The ten exceptions are all located in the epistle to the Hebrews and are direct references to our Lord Jesus Christ. They present him as the great high priest who was foreshadowed by the high priests under the law of Moses. Accordingly, there is not a hint in these occurrences of any priest in the kingdom of God, except our Lord himself.

The Greek word for priest is *hiereus.* **The term "priest" is found 33 times in the new covenant scriptures. It refers to the Levitical priests 18 times. Of the fifteen remaining occurrences, 8 refer to Christ, 3 to Melchizedek, 1 to the pagan priest of Jupiter, and the other 3 to the entire membership of the community of saints, who are described as "a kingdom, even priests."**

The word "priest" is never once applied to a special ministry or caste in the congregation of our Lord. No gospel preacher, bishop, or deacon, was ever referred to as a priest in any distinctive sense; no such individual was a priest by right of office.

The word "priesthood" is found but six times in the new covenant scriptures. Four of these appearances are in one chapter (Hebrews 7). In every instance the four refer either to the Levitical priesthood or to that of our Lord. The other two instances are also found in one chapter. They designate the entire body of believers as "a holy priesthood" (1 Peter 2:5), and "a royal priesthood" (1 Peter 2:9).

Nothing is clearer than the fact that in the primitive Christian community there was no priesthood other than that of the Lord Jesus Christ and every one of his followers, who were to "offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable unto God." The special priesthood which is so prevalent in our day has no scriptural precedent under the rule of Jesus. It has been created by men and has arisen without divine warrant. It usurps the privileges and prerogatives which belong to all alike. It makes a pretentious claim to authority but it asserts a divine right without a word of divine writ to sustain it. God's magnificent plan for the ages culminates in every saint recognized as a real priest. Any attempt to promote a special priesthood clothed with special powers to minister in things pertaining unto God thwarts the divine purpose. It exists as an affront to the Great King and his humble and loyal subjects.

In spite of this we are faced with the fact that in our day the idea of a special priesthood to minister for and in behalf of other saints is so prevalent that a majority of believers have no concept of the people of God functioning in any other manner. Few indeed realize that they were ever intended to be priests, and their idea of priesthood has been so conditioned by the subservient role to which they are reconciled that they find it ludicrous to consider themselves as priests in any sense.

The danger of this lies in the fact that the kingdom of heaven is designed to be a kingdom of priests. It derives its nature from a citizenry composed of priests. If we create a wholly different order in which the citizens disclaim any relationship as priests, there is a question as to whether it can be regarded as the kingdom of heaven or not. To what extent can we alter the fundamental constituency of the kingdom of heaven and still regard ourselves as composing it? Perhaps nothing is more important for our generation than a recapture of the royal priesthood.

This brings us to the place where we may well investigate

another word— clergy. It is from the Greek *kleeros* which means "a lot, an inheritance." In the original it occurs thirteen times in the Scriptures. It is rendered heritage 1, inheritance 2, lot 3, lots 5, and part 2 times. The word is never used to mark off a segment or portion of God's people from the rest in the new covenant scriptures. All who have been redeemed and have entered into Christ constitute the heritage of God. He has not selected a special group to serve as his lot or inheritance.

This was not true under the legalistic regime created by the old covenant. Then God had a special inheritance, a clergy to act as his special functionaries. "At that time the Lord set apart the tribe of Levi, to carry the ark of the covenant of the Lord, to stand before the Lord to minister to him, and to bless in his name to this day. Therefore Levi has no *portion* or *inheritance* with his brothers; the Lord is his *inheritance,* as the Lord your God said to him" (Deuteronomy 10:8, 9).

Observe that here a special group was set apart, or ordained to minister unto God and to pronounce a blessing or benediction upon the remainder of the congregation in God's name. Under Judaism there was a distinction between the clergy and the laity. There were certain rituals reserved exclusively for the priests, or clergy, to perform. The people were not permitted to enter the sacred areas or to engage in the clerical functions.

Inasmuch as the Levitical priests constituted a special clergy to minister unto God, they were to be supported in their clerical duties by those in whose behalf they ministered. "The Levitical priests, that is all the tribe of Levi, shall have no portion or inheritance with Israel; they shall eat the offerings by fire to the Lord, and his rightful dues. They shall have no inheritance among their brethren; the Lord is their *inheritance* as he promised them" (Deuteronomy 18:1, 2).

Nothing is clearer than the fact that under "the ministration of death" which was written and engraven in stones

God created a clergy with certain sacerdotal functions. Those who composed it wore distinctive robes and stood between the people and God. But all such distinctions were rendered invalid by the cross of Christ.

We are not under law, but under grace. "The law came by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." We are under a better covenant based upon better promises. Under the reign of grace God no longer has a special tribe ordained as clergymen. Through grace every child of God is sanctified and anointed, set apart and ordained to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable unto him. We are all God's portion or inheritance in the world.

Every Christian is a clergyman in the only scriptural usage of the term. To create a special clergy is to lapse back into Judaism. It is easier to live under law than under grace. Law creates its special interpreters and judges, and the community can rest in their judgment and be relieved of personal responsibility. When problems arise men can "go up to the priest," and his clerical interpretation becomes the authorized guide. Yet it was from this very system Jesus died to deliver us. He made us free from all priestly and hierarchical domination.

It is impossible to create a special clergy without, by the same act, creating *a laity.* **The word** *laos* **from which we get "laity" is found at least 141 times in the new covenant scriptures, where it is translated "people."**

In every instance when applied to the community of Christ it refers to the whole body of believers. It never refers to a group as distinguished from a priestly or ministerial class. This was not true under the legalistic covenant. There was always a careful line of distinction drawn between the priests (clergy) and the people (laity).

"And he (the high priest) shall make atonement for the

priests (clergy) and for all the people (laity) of the assembly" (Leviticus 16:33). "These preparations having thus been made, the priests (clergy) go continually into the outer tent, performing their ritual duties; but into the second only the high priest goes, and he but once a year, and not without taking blood which he offers for himself and for the errors of the people (laity)" (Hebrews 9:6, 7).

The great difference under the new covenant is illustrated in one important verse. It affirms the priesthood of all believers and uses the term *laos* to designate the same group. "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people (laity), that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9).

This is a significant passage because it identifies the royal priesthood with God's laity. Every priest of God is one of his laity, every member of God's laity is a priest. Every child of God is his lot or inheritance through the blood of Jesus, therefore, all of God's children constitute his *clergy.* Since they also constitute his *laity,* there can be no distinction between clergy and laity in the kingdom of Christ.

It is worth noting that Peter declares that Christians are God's laity (people), "that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness." God's laity are not those to whom messages of God are brought. They are themselves the bringers of a message. The laity are not those who listen to a clergy declare the wonderful works of God; they are the clergy who do the declaring.

It is sad indeed to contemplate how far we have fallen away from God's ideal of the priestly citizenry. It is not uncommon to hear Christians excuse themselves for their ignorance or apathy with the words, "After all, I am just a layman." This is equivalent to saying "I am just one of God's

people." The tragedy is that those who thus speak proceed to act as if they are not God's people.

The clergy are expected to engage in religious activities, to walk circumspectly, to employ proper language, to visit the sick and to study the Bible. This is regarded as the field of clerical function. This is what the clergy is paid to do. Those who are "just laymen" live on a different plane. Their function is to go listen to the clergyman and pay his salary for performing a priestly role. But all of this is as far from God's program for the Christian life as the blood of Christ is from the blood of bulls and goats.

Just as any attempt to create a special clergy must result in a laity, so any attempt to create a distinctive laity must result in a special clergy. Sometimes men seek to avoid the implications of their philosophy by employing other terms to designate what they create. They frequently borrow scriptural terminology in the vain hope that a thing may be sanctified by calling a good name over it.

But we may designate the clergy system by whatever terms we will, borrowing the language of apostate ecclesiasticism, or "stealing the livery of heaven" in which to clothe it, yet the fact is that so long as the idea of a special ministerial caste exists, and the remainder of the saints are regarded as "the laity," that long we are nearer to Rome than to Jerusalem. And that long we are standing at a mount that can be touched rather than before Mount Sion.

Let us be very plain so there can be no ground for misunderstanding. We may call our clergyman "our minister," "local evangelist," or just plain preacher," but if he occupies a place of prominence in the assembly of saints as the front man for the congregation, if he is the exclusive minister, by virtue of his office, "to declare the wonderful works of God," when the whole community come together in one place, and if other saints

are excluded from the opportunity by his very presence, we have a special clergyman. A preacher can be a clergyman as easily as a clergyman can be a preacher.

It is going to be very difficult to recover the abandoned ideal of the universal priesthood of believers. This is true for several reasons. The greatest deterrent is the bitter opposition to it by many who profess to be followers of Jesus. We have converted men to systems, structures and organizations. They have no real sense of vital relationship to Jesus as the head of a living organism. They are often lazy, indifferent and unconcerned. And many who never thought of fighting the devil will fight the thought of returning to the responsible role of priesthood. Too, we have been betrayed into measuring spiritual growth by numerical statistics. We have two criteria by which to judge our success— attendance and contributions. This may well be called "the scholar-dollar" fallacy. It operates on the assumption that the greater the number in Sunday School and the greater the bank account the closer to heaven we are. Actually there may be little relationship between the number of dollars in the bank and the number of names in the Book of Life.

To abandon the clergy-oriented modern institution for the Spirit-filled community of saints in the first century is the last thing most people will consider. It is probable that the primitive community was more adapted to meaningful meetings in small homes, third floor walk-up tenements (as at Troas), or in catacombs and caves. Here those who were fighting for survival of a cause could come and bind up their wounds, share their experiences and exhort one another to shoulder the cross again. Their problem was not the institutional community image but how to survive individually until the morrow.

We must be realistic enough to recognize that we live in a modern world. There are many conditions in twentieth century America which were undreamed of in first century Palestine or Asia Minor. Religion has been institutionalized for many

centuries. Millions who want to follow Jesus do not think of themselves as runners, pugilists or soldiers in a spiritual sense. References to such activities are regarded as portraying a quaint symbolism of a bygone area.

We are resigned to being spectators rather than participants. The action is to be carried out by trained. professionals. We are the drama critics who sit in favored locations and observe the presentation without ever becoming really involved. We are like natives watching a battle from the hills whose special interests favor one side in the conflict, but who never move down into the fray.

It is evident that a priestly role involves service to God. A priest under the old covenant did not act by proxy. He was not a mere onlooker but an active sharer in the responsibilities pertaining to the temple. But this was only a step in the divine program which was to culminate in a universal priesthood of all believers.

Our tragedy is that we have been betrayed into going back to before the cross and reinstating the concept of priesthood which was a part of Judaism. We have again created a professional priesthood to minister in our behalf. We think of the pulpit as "a holy place" in "the sanctuary" where only those with special ordination or anointing may officiate.

In many cases those who enter the pulpit wear robes to distinguish them from the rest of the saints. They regard the speaker's stand as a "sacred desk" and pronouncements made from it may be uttered in a special "religious voice" adopted for the occasion. Such utterances may be given greater attention than those made by a public schoolteacher who instructs a group of students in a Sunday school class.

The minister may develop a sense of importance as to his position and speak about "my elders," "my church," "my

laymen." If he ever regards the body of believers as constituting a priesthood he regards himself as a sort of local high priest whose task is to correlate and be responsible for a ritual or liturgy by which men approach God through his leading or direction. This has tended to institutionalize the church and to eliminate the family feeling so essential to the maintenance of brotherly love under the fatherhood of God.

From time to time there have been movements sparked in the history of the Christian community to get rid of the clergy. John Milton led such an attempt in his day and directed a vitriolic attack. Unfortunately most of these ventures were as negative as they were antagonistic. They were anti-clerical and were directed toward the goal of reducing the clerics to what is called lay-status.

It would seem that a reverse approach would be more in keeping with God's purpose. Those who think of themselves as "the laity" should be taught to regard themselves as "priests of the most high God," and should be equipped for the fulfillment of the priestly function required by the new covenant.

We must come to recognize that God's only sanctuary is the human heart consecrated and dedicated to the high calling of Christian service. In the economy of Christ, priest and sacrifice become one. Jesus offered himself, and it is written, "we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb. 10:10). As a part of the priesthood inaugurated through this universal sacrifice we also must "present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, as a spiritual service."

Unfortunately, we have been betrayed into erecting temples and tabernacles in which we dedicate sanctuaries, and we tend to think of what we do in such special places as service to God. But all of this is pre-Christian and Judaistic in origin. It actually nullifies the power of the cross, while pampering our

pride and salving the conscience. Temples require special priests, vestments, liturgies, orders of service, and a great many other things wholly unknown to the new covenant. We have actually forsaken "the order of Melchizedek" for that of Aaron and Levi, and have reverted to "the law of a carnal commandment" in preference to "the power of an endless life" (Hebrews 7:16).

This does not mean that members of the royal priesthood should not assemble together. Indeed, the very epistle which says the most about priesthood specifically says we should not forsake the assembling of ourselves together. But the same passage tells us that the purpose of our convening should be to incite one another to love and to good works, and to encourage one another (Hebrews 10:24, 25). We do not meet to conduct a service to God, or to offer a ritualistic sacrifice. We are the sacrifice.

This means that wherever a child of God is, there God is in his sanctuary. If one works at a lathe in the shop, at a desk in the office, at a table in the laboratory, or at a counter in the store, he is God's priest in that place, and whatever he says or does must reflect the glory of God.

It is very difficult for one who works on an assembly line to see how the affixing of three nuts to their respective bolts can have any regal or priestly significance, but this is because we are not trained to see how God uses *things* to open up doors of ministry. Jesus took advantage of a well curb when He was tired to talk to one woman who was a social outcast, and through her ministered to a whole city. So priests of God can use coffee-breaks and lunch hours in our own day of industrialization.

One of the major differences between Judaism and the Christian community is that under the former the important thing was the place where the sacrifice was offered, while under the latter, place has lost significance. The true worshipper no longer thinks in terms of a particular site or city as "the place

where men ought to worship" but in terms of spirit and reality.

Under the Levitical priesthood men had to go where the high priest was in order to sacrifice, but our high priest left heaven to come where men were, and by so doing he lifted worship from the drudgery of time and place and made it universal as to both. God can only be confined by what he has made, and never by anything which men have made. "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands, neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed anything."

It is a tremendous challenge which confronts us. We must undo the crystallizing trend of centuries, and turn back the tide of ecclesiasticism which has engulfed and overwhelmed the ideal of God. We must instil in the hearts of men a recognition of the placelessness of worship and the universality of priesthood of the chosen generation comprising the citizenry of the holy nation. In short, we must restore to earth the dream of the prophets and the vision of the apostles. We must uncover the Word and discover the Way.

Priesthood and Ministry

Contents

The Roman Catholic Church has built up a system of special priesthood on a hierarchical basis, the grounds for which we will examine in subsequent chapters. In approximation to this the Protestant world generally has adopted a clergy system which relegates the members to what is referred to as "lay status," and which effectively negates the new covenant ideal of universal priesthood. Thus the concept of "the priesthood of all believers" has virtually been lost, or if it is still professed it is not given spiritual emphasis in practice.

There are a great many factors which contribute to this. One is the mistaken view concerning the nature of the church, which is no longer regarded as a functioning body served actively by every member, but is looked upon as an institution which may purchase services in its own behalf. A general apathy toward intensive study of the Bible has created a widespread ignorance of the language of revelation and its connotations. Too, the clergy system is now so venerable with age that it is accepted as of divine origin. It is believed that the Christian religion would be powerless without it.

The community of believers in our day suffers from a confusion of tongues. The terms used in the scriptures are often applied to those things which are foreign or alien to their original meaning, and new words have been coined to describe Biblical concepts which serve only to warp or distort them. General terms are given only a specific meaning, and vice versa.

For one to attempt a recapture of the original faith and order as set forth by the holy apostles means that he must recover the meaning attached to the words used by the Spirit. Frequently this means stripping from such words the ecclesiastical ideas with which they have been clothed. When this is done it becomes obvious that the true meaning has been concealed for many generations.

A good illustration of what we mean is found in the words "minister" and "ministry." These appear as translations of Greek terms, but they have been given such limitations in our day that the majesty and breadth originally attached to them has been all but lost.

"Minister" is from the Latin *ministro,* **which means "to serve, to attend, to wait on." A minister is one who serves, and any service rendered is ministry. The word "minister" designates one as a servant but never, of itself, expresses or suggests the kind of service rendered. One simply cannot tell by looking at the word the nature of the service. To use the word ministry in such a manner as to apply it exclusively to one branch or field of service is to do an injustice to the language of the Spirit.**

In spite of this, to speak of "the minister" in our day is to refer to only one functionary. In justification for this it is urged that Paul declared that he was "made a minister" (Eph. 3:7), that Tychicus was "a faithful minister in the Lord" (Eph. 6:21), that Epaphras was "a faithful minister of Christ" (Col. I:7), and that Timothy was told how to become "a good minister" (1 Tim. 4:6). What does this mean? Simply that these men were good servants, faithful in whatever relationship they were called upon to sustain to God, Christ and the congregation.

"Minister" is from *diakonos,* **which occurs 30 times. It is rendered minister 20, deacon 3, and servant 7 times. It is translated "deacon" in Philippians 1:1, 1 Timothy 3:8, 12. To**

employ it to designate a special type of labor in a congregation, exclusive of that done by the deacons would be absurd in the light of God's revelation. Yet when one asks a friend to come and hear "the new minister" he is not inviting him to listen to a speech by a newly appointed deacon. Nor does the term "associate minister" refer to an assistant to the deacons. One who decides to "study for the ministry" is not planning to train for the diaconate in most places. Yet the word "deacon" is a transliteration of the Greek word for minister.

The word for minister is found in John 2:5, 9 where it is applied to the servants who drew water which was then changed into wine by Jesus. It is apparent that one could argue that a minister is "a drawer of water" with as much scriptural ground as he could contend that a minister is "a preacher of the gospel."

Phoebe is called "a minister of the church which is at Cenchrea" (Romans 16:1) but we would hardly surmise that she was sent forth by the congregation as an evangelist. Those religious bodies which claim to oppose "women ministers" find themselves in difficulty with Phoebe, whom the apostle Paul commended as a minister of a local congregation.

Of course there is nothing in the term "servant" which defines the type of service. The nature of the service is not inherent in the word. The word servant does not mean gardener, chauffeur, maid or cook. There is a difference in saying that "A cook is a servant," and in saying, "A servant is a cook." So there is a great difference between the statements, "A gospel preacher is a minister," and "A minister is a gospel preacher."

A preacher is a minister in the congregation, but so is the custodian who cuts the grass and sweeps the floor, the one who supervises the nursery, and the one who prints and folds the bulletins. Those who use their cars to transport others to the meetings, who visit the homes for the aged, and who look after the needy, are all ministers. It is at this point we have been

betrayed into a way of life and speech which contravenes God's plan and purpose. We have actually squeezed the words of the Holy Spirit until we have wrung them dry of their content.

Only one man's name appears upon the signboard with the caption— Minister. The same name appears upon the letterheads and stationery, and upon the bulletins and mailing pieces. By the very designation of one as *the* minister, we have successfully convinced all of the others that they are not ministers. They do not even think of themselves in that category.

If you address a group of members in the foyer with the question, "Are you gentlemen ministers of the congregation," the laughing reply will be, "No, the minister is in the office." Even more ridiculous in the light of the scriptures is for one to reply, "I am not a *minister,* I am just a *deacon."* This is the equivalent of saying, "I am not a minister, I am just a minister." It is little wonder that the church is confused.

A further indication of our "confusion of tongues" is demonstrated when we talk of one "preparing to enter the ministry." We mean by it that the person under consideration expects to make a professional career out of preaching the gospel. It is only fair to state, however, that he will be expected to take courses designated as homiletics, hermeneutics, pastoral psychology, church administration, religious communications, etc. All of this would have been wholly unintelligible to the apostles and to the communities of saints planted by their labors.

"Ministry," "ministering," and "ministration," come from *diakonia,* which is used 34 times in the new covenant scriptures. It first occurs in Luke 10:40 where Martha was said to be "distracted with much serving." One might infer from this that a student who went to college to prepare for the ministry would major in "home economics," with a minor in "table settings." Martha was so deeply involved in ministering that she made application to Jesus for an "assistant minister." "Lord, do you

not care that my sister has left me to serve (minister) alone? Tell her to help me."

The word for ministry and ministering is employed for the daily distribution of food (Acts 6:1), for the administration of funds to the famine-ridden and drought-stricken Judean saints (2 Cor. 8:4, 9:1), for the work of Paul (2 Cor. 11:8), and that of Timothy (2 Tim. 4:5). Thus a person is engaged in ministry whether he is serving tables, carrying funds to the unfortunate, proclaiming the truth, or in any other fashion serving others.

There is nothing distinctive in the word "ministry" as to the kind of service performed. There are two great sources of intellectual evil in the interpretation of God's revelation. One is to create distinctions where God has made none; the other is to destroy or lose sight of the distinctions which God has made.

It is not too much to say that the life of the saint is expressed in the word ministry, or service. Jesus came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. He declared that he was among men as one who served. Those who follow him must come to minister, and not to be ministered unto. The community of believers should have as a goal the providing of an opportunity for every member to share in constructive fashion his thinking and gifts. Any system which commits the edification of the body to one person hired for the role, and reduces the rest to mere spectators is contrary to the plan and purpose of God.

It is at this point that the modern institutional church, while professing to be God's agency for transformation of the world, actually operates to defeat the divine intention. The church envisions itself as a rival of other religious institutions. It is concerned with its "image" in society. It therefore becomes involved in presenting good programs to impress the visiting public, which it calls "worship services," but which consist chiefly of ritualistic or liturgical performances.

There is no question but what the gatherings of the saints in apostolic times were in the nature of family reunions. The spontaneity and unrehearsed participation was of the type which you might expect to find in our day when a Christian family sits down at the Thanksgiving table. Even the least one is heard with special appreciation, and those who are less forward are gently urged to share in the occasion.

Since religion has become highly organized by promoters, whose motivations may be quite genuine and sincere, it has had to invent and devise new offices and officers to keep it moving with accelerated pace. The idea of a personal heart-to-heart relationship with God through the Spirit has been replaced with the philosophy that one should be allied with "a successful church." Such a church is one that enjoys good social relationships and attracts the right people whose presence can lend it an aura of respectability.

It is for this reason that the more dire need there is in a community the farther the church removes itself from it. The desperately poor do not help the image of the church by being within it. Instead they serve only to salve the consciences of the membership by allowing them to make contributions to relieve those whom they never expect to personally encounter.

The "local minister" is the front man for the congregation in our day. He is the key to its popularity or its waning influence. Often a great deal of investigation is made before negotiations begin for his hiring. His personal mannerisms, dress, tone quality and pulpit aplomb come under close scrutiny. A great deal of behind-the-scenes arguing may go on as to the relative merits of several candidates for the post. If a majority of the members of the committee are from one school, an alumnus from that subsidiary institution stands a better chance than one from another alma mater.

So much is this a part of the institutional religious life of

our day that it comes with a shock of surprise when one points out that it is utterly foreign to the concept enunciated by the holy apostles. The "local minister" or "one-man pastor" is unknown to the new covenant scriptures. The community of the saints was edified and strengthened by the use of every gift. The believers never gathered to hear a "sermon." The word is not even found in the sacred scriptures. Origen was called "the father of the sermon."

The royal priesthood has certain rights which are divinely given. These rights are accompanied by the responsibility to use them. They cannot be abrogated or transferred without doing serious injury to the body, or despite to the Spirit of grace. One of the basic rights is that of every faithful child of God who has the ability, to speak to his fellows for their edification and comfort. In the primitive congregations men were urged to seek this above all other spiritual gifts.

Of course this meant that the public expression of worship was so arranged as to provide for this exercise, since it would be ridiculous to urge all to seek the ability to edify and then relegate the function to one imported for a fee. Instead of one taking all of the time, the brethren were taught to yield the speaking privilege to one another in love (1 Corinthians 14:30, 31). And to this fact the scholarship of the world gives ready agreement. Read carefully the following statements from eminent historians

"The participation in worship was not confined to the official members, but to every male member it was permitted to utter his apprehension of truth. The ordinary services of the church were very similar to those of a good prayer meeting at the present time." (A. H. Newman, D.D., LL.D., *Manual of Church History,* **page 141).**

"The form of worship of the primitive church was also exceedingly simple. Meetings were held commonly on the first day of the week in private houses or in some public building

appropriated to that purpose. At those meetings prayer was offered, portions of the Old Testament and letters from the apostles were read, psalms and perhaps hymns were sung; and words 'of exhortation' were spoken freely by anyone who might feel moved to do this." (Andrew C. Zenas, Professor of Biblical Theology, McCormick Theological Seminary, *Compendium of Church History,* **page 28).**

"The major premise of every true conclusion as to the ministry of the Apostolic Age, must be the outpouring of the Spirit, hailed by Peter at Pentecost as the mark of Messianic times. In it Moses' ideal that all the Lord's people should be prophets was in substance fulfilled. Accordingly in their worship, as we see from 1 Corinthians 14, each believer was free to edify his fellows by psalm, teaching, revelation, tongue, interpretation, as well as prayer or Eucharist. Whatever limitations expediency came in time to impose on this diffused ministry, the idea involved had, and has, abiding force; and it was not the idea underlying the later distinctions between 'clergy' and 'laity.'" (James Vernon Bartlet, M. A., *Ten Epochs of Church History,* **page 477).**

"Worship in the apostolic age was a spontaneous expression of devout feeling. The order of worship was a free copy of the synagogue service. Selections from the Old Testament were read. Expositions of Scripture and spontaneous speaking followed." (George P. Fisher, *History of the Christian Church,* **page 141).**

"The meeting described by the apostle (1 Corinthians 14) is not to be taken as something which might be seen in Corinth but was peculiar to that city; it may be taken as a type of the Christian meeting throughout the Gentile Christian churches; for the apostle, in his suggestions and criticisms continually speaks of what took place throughout all the churches. What cannot fail to strike us in this picture is the untrammeled liberty of the worship, the possibility of every male member of the

congregation taking part in the prayers and exhortations, and the consequent responsibility laid on the whole community to see that the service was for edification." (Thomas M. Lindsay, D.D., Principal of Glasgow College of the United Free Church of Scotland, *The Church and the Ministry in the Early Centuries,* **page 48).**

"That two or three should thus take part, and all being 'done unto edifying', was, and still should be, a matter for dependence upon, and leading by, the Holy Spirit. No uncontrolled impulse is to be allowed. Gradually, however, clerical power became dominant, and the worship and testimony of a local church was committed to the control of one man, who became known as 'the minister'. This was an easy way of seeking to regulate difficulties, but it was not God's way. Two wrongs do not make a right. The system of 'the one-man ministry' spread over Christendom and remained general, until many of God's people were awakened to the importance of adhering to New Testament principles and recognizing the prerogatives and claims of the Holy Spirit in the gatherings of a church; they realized the unscripturality of the stifling of the development of spiritual gifts by the appointment of one man to conduct the services. The Lord will have regard in the coming Day of reward to those who, amidst disrepute and criticism, have sought to remain faithful to Him and obedient to His will as revealed in God's Word." (W. E. Vine, M.A., *First Corinthians,* **page 196).**

"We understand edification here in its general and original sense, as given to it in St. Paul's writings, as referring to the advancement and development, from its common ground, of the whole church. The edification, in this sense, was the common work of all. Even edification by the Word was not assigned exclusively to one individual; every man who felt the inward call to it might give utterance to the Word in the assembled church." (Dr. Augustus Neander, Ordinary Professor of Theology in the University of Berlin, *Church History,* **Vol. 1, page 251).**

"From this (1 Corinthians 14:26) and other passages it is clear that the upbuilding of the church was not confined then, as now, to one, or at most two, of the congregation; but was the privilege of all the members, and though such a practice is liable to abuse (James 3:1), it is possible that its entire disuse has led to still greater evils obvious to all— 'quenching of the Spirit.'" (Robert Young, author of Young's Analytical Concordance).

"There is no doubt, that in the ordinary Lord's Day meeting of the apostolic churches, quite a number of brethren took part in the speaking and praying. This is clear to any one who will read carefully the fourteenth chapter of First Corinthians. It is true that the instructions contained in that chapter are mostly given to persons possessed of spiritual gifts; but if, when men possessed of such gifts were in the church, it was not best that any one of them should occupy the entire time, why should we think it best to reverse the rule in the absence of such gifts? Surely we have no right to make such a change unless there be something in the absence of spiritual gifts which demands it." (J. W. McGarvey, *Apostolic Times,* **1873).**

Since it cannot be denied that in the days of the apostles the edification of the congregations was not limited to one or two men, but was the privilege of all who were faithful and able, and that this precedent was by actual disposition of the Holy Spirit, and with apostolic approval and regulation, it remains for us to enquire upon what grounds the principle is now ignored and a wholly different system inaugurated which was unknown to the early saints?

The most common excuse for the modern substitution is that the picture given in the New Testament belongs to the days of spiritual gifts bestowed by the laying on of apostolic hands, and consequently is not binding upon the church today in the absence of such gifts. But was not every letter written to and regulating the churches, penned in the days of spiritual gifts? Then by what reasoning can we apply any of the new covenant

letters to the congregations in our day? If we can carelessly dismiss the plan of edification authorized "when the whole congregation assembles," can we not dismiss all other instructions given to the believers?

If the system of hiring one man to speak to the assembled congregation each time is superior to that of having "all speak one by one" (1 Corinthians 14:31), why did not the Holy Spirit bestow the gift to edify only upon the most talented one in each congregation?

It is not denied that men possess natural gifts and abilities in these days. Supernatural gifts belong to the supernatural era of the Christian dispensation and natural gifts belong to the natural era. Will not the very same principles which governed the use of supernatural gifts to the edification of the assembly also govern the use of the natural gifts to the same end?

The Holy Spirit uses the term *charisma* **to designate the gifts. Concerning this word and its usage we insert herewith a statement from Fenton John Anthony Hort, D.D., Lady Margaret's Reader in Divinity, University of Cambridge, in his well-known work,** *The Christian Ecclesia,* **page two:**

"Charisma comes of course from charizomai; it means anything given of free bounty not of debt, contract or right. It is thus obviously used in Philo, and as obviously in Romans 5:15; 6:23; and less obviously, but I believe the same force in the other passages of St. Paul, as also in the only other New Testament place, 1 Peter 4:10. In these instances it is used to designate what we call 'natural advantages' independent of any human process of acquisition, or advantage freshly received in the course of Providence; both alike being regarded as so many free gifts from the Lord to men, and as designed by Him to be distinctive qualifications for rendering distinctive service to men, or communities of men."

Inasmuch as the Holy Spirit employed the identical term to designate both natural and supernatural gifts, referring to the gift of sexual control (1 Corinthians 7:7) in exactly the same fashion as the direct manifestations of 1 Corinthians 12:4, can we not conclude that all gifts or abilities are to be utilized for "the common good" (1 Corinthians 12:7), regardless of the method of bestowal? And would not a system which makes impossible the functioning of the abilities of all the brethren today be as obnoxious to God as the same system would have been in Corinth in the days of Paul?

The Holy Spirit moved Peter to write to the exiles of the Dispersion, "As each has received a gift, employ it for one another, as good stewards of God's grace" (1 Peter 4:10). Would the same Spirit, if writing to us today, change the message to read, "Let each stifle his natural gifts, and employ another, as a good steward of God's grace"?

If the apostle Paul wrote to a congregation in Rome in the twentieth century, would he say, "I myself am satisfied about you, my brethren, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to instruct one another" (Romans 15:14), or would he recommend that they hire a "local minister"? Inasmuch as he was satisfied with them, and about them, would he be satisfied with our modern substitution which, while the people love to have it so, makes impossible the functioning of the assembly as Paul outlined it?

When the apostle addressed his first letter to the congregation at Thessalonica, he emphasized the fact of the coming of our Lord, adding, "Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing" (1 Thessalonians 5:11). Is there a better time to exercise the members in building one another up than when all have gathered in one place. This was God's program for the congregation originally. Has he altered it for the present time? Who will affirm that an uninspired man may utilize all of the

time appointed for public edification, when an inspired man was not permitted to do so?

The system into which the religious world has fallen has created the greatest "brain drain" in history. It is directly responsible for accumulation of a tremendous mass of unused talent. In many congregations there are brilliant men who are never allowed to share their thinking with the rest of the saints and faithful brethren simply because they are not regarded as being in the clerical caste.

Superintendents of schools, college professors, attorneys, advertising executives, and many others, are doomed to a life of perpetual silence in the public meetings by this system. Men who are invited to address conventions of learned personnel are never invited to share their thinking in the public assembly of the congregations where they attend. Often they are forced to listen to one who invades their professional field in his remarks, although quite ignorant of the subject upon which he professes to speak with authority.

Congregations need to hear the personal testimony of men who are in daily contact with life as it is being lived. Those who teach science in the college classroom are more qualified to speak about the problems raised by modern research than one who never studied the subject. The psychiatrist in the congregation should be more capable of talking about emotional and personality disorders than one whose observation is limited and who has no technical knowledge of the subject.

Why should a congregation not be allowed to share in all of the helpful insights of all of its membership? Why muzzle men who are often more scholarly and qualified than the one who is hired to project the orthodox position week after week? That many are growing weary with the sterility which has resulted is obvious. A reaction is setting in which takes the form of a revolution. In many areas "an underground church" is forming.

This phenomenon is observable when people become tired of meaningless and monotonous ritual, of forms and ceremonies. Small groups begin to meet in homes without benefit of clergy, and in these cell meetings all are free to speak their honest sentiments and convictions. No one lords it over the others. There is no clergy-laity division. It is apparent that many are hungering and thirsting after righteousness and want to feed themselves.

The royal priesthood should be made to realize that divine rights have been surrendered to, or captured by, a special caste, an incipient clergy. These rights must be returned to the saints, or God's plan of the ages will be nullified as it pertains to our responsibility. By what scriptural authority do men set themselves up, or offer themselves for hire, as *the ministers* of the congregations?

On what bases do some of the priests claim such exaltation, eminence, enthronement and esteem, over the other regal princes of the priesthood of heaven? Is it by virtue of a more noble birth? Is it the result of superior knowledge conveyed to them by other mortals? Are they composed of a more worthy clay which elevates the fortunate ones thus created to shine as brighter constellations in the Christian galaxy?

Every Christian is a priest! Every Christian is a minister! Every priest of God has a divine right as a minister of God to serve the King of kings and his loyal subjects. Every talent must be utilized in God's service. Every man who has the ability to exhort, edify or comfort his brethren must be granted the right to do so. God has placed no pulpit as a throne in the midst of the congregation, to which one man has an exclusive right.

The freedom of the speaker's platform for every loyal capable subject must be asserted, or we must admit that a part of the worship of God belongs to a stipendiary, and in that phase of devotion we can only approach God through human

mediators, financially supported by the saints "to perform their ritual duties." Since this is the function of priests (Hebrews 9:6) we will then have a special caste of priests above their fellows, and we will take steps toward Rome.

E. De Pressense has written: "We have already shown that the universal priesthood was only maintained to its full extent in practice, as well as in theory, so long as the redemptive sacrifice of Christ was accepted without reserve as the source of universal salvation. He is the one Priest of the Church only if He truly finished all upon the cross, so that His disciples have but to appropriate His sacrifice by faith, in order to become priests and kings in Him and by Him. If all was not completed on Calvary, if the salvation of man is not a perfected work, then we are still separated from God; we have no free access into his sanctuary, and we seek mediators who may present our offering for us. When Christianity is regarded rather as a new law than as the sovereign manifestation of Divine grace, it leaves us in our impotence, our unworthiness, to our fruitless strivings and our partial aspirations. We are no more kings and priests, we fall back under the yoke of a servile fear. The hierarchy gains by all that men lose of childlike confidence in that infinite mercy which alone renders needless all official mediation between the penitent and God." *(The Early Years of Christianity,* **Volume 4, pages 47, 48. Translated by Annie Harwood-Holmden).**

The Case For a Special Priesthood

Contents

Fairness demands that we consider and examine the position of those who uphold the idea of a special priesthood, and who seek to establish a difference among God's people represented by the terms "clergy" and "laity." Since this doctrine seems to reach its ultimate in the Roman Catholic Church, we will carefully scrutinize the position of that great religio-politico institution on the issue. Before me lies the booklet by Rev. John A. O'Brien, Ph.D., entitled *"The Priesthood: A Divine Institution."* **It has a sub-heading: "The Priest is Christ's Ambassador to Men." The booklet bears the approval signatures of Very Rev. Msgr. T. E. Dillon as Censor Librorum; and John Francis Noll, D.D., Bishop of Fort Wayne. Surely if it is possible to make out a logical case for the special priesthood this booklet should be able to accomplish it, since it was written for that very purpose.**

In our examination of its postulates and alleged proofs, we shall present it in *toto,* **lest we be accused of scrapping the arguments or omitting something vital to the conclusion. Our method will be to print it section by section and test its claims as we proceed. In some cases we will notice and comment upon each sentence, in others we shall deal with a whole paragraph; this dependent upon the nature of the argument involved. Below is the introductory section of the booklet.**

> **The Catholic Church differs from the various denominations in that it alone possesses an altar and a**

priesthood. It worships Almighty God not alone by prayer but by sacrifice as well. It offers up in an unbloody manner the Sacrifice of Christ on Calvary. This sacrifice was foreshadowed in the Old Law by the bloody sacrifice of the priesthood of Levi, the offerings of sheep and goats and oxen. The offering of the sacrifice of bread and wine by Melchisedech, King of Salem, and priest of the Most High, typified the clean oblation of which the prophet Malachi spoke: "From the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice and there is offered to my name a clean oblation, saith the Lord of hosts." Such is the divinely inspired prophecy concerning that clean oblation, the holy Sacrifice of the Mass which constitutes the central act of worship in the Church founded by Christ.

Without a priesthood, however, there can be no altar and no sacrifice, as the experience of our separated brethren abundantly demonstrates. There can be preaching and prayer. But that essential element of worship, sacrifice, which bulks so large in the Old Testament, is lost without a priesthood. Did Christ found a Church but make no provision for a priesthood to offer sacrifice? Did He fail to institute a priesthood which would continue in all ages the work He had begun? Did He launch His bark without captain or crew to guide it over the uncharted waters of the centuries yet to come?

We have no more desire to defend the various denominations than we do the Roman Church, for neither constitute the New Testament congregation of saints established by our Lord through His holy apostles. The churches of Christ have a priesthood. It is composed of all those who are God's own people (1 Peter 2:9) and these priests worship God not only by prayer but by "spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2:5).

The Romish priesthood which "offers up in an unbloody

manner the Sacrifice of Christ on Calvary" is doing that which no child of God was ever authorized to do, and while it is true that the real sacrifice of our Lord was prefigured and adumbrated by the offering of sheep and goats and oxen, "when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent, he entered *once for all* **into the Holy Place, taking not the blood of goats and calves but his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption" (Heb. 9:11, 12). Since the mass is supposed to be a daily offering in an unbloody manner of the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, the Romish priests like those of Judaism "go continually— performing their ritual duties" (Heb. 9:6). But of Christ it is affirmed that he need "not offer himself repeatedly" but "has appeared once for all at the end of the age to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb. 10:25, 26). The Roman Catholic Church is an unholy mixture of Jewish ritualism, pagan superstition, and Christian revelation.**

Melchizedek did not offer a sacrifice of bread and wine. He merely brought forth common items of sustenance, and with them refreshed Abraham and his servants on their return from battle. Josephus says: "Now this Melchizedek supplied Abram's army in an hospitable manner, and *gave them provisions in abundance, and as they were feasting,* **he began to praise him, and to bless God for subduing his enemies under him" (Antiquities of Jews 1-10-2). Melchizedek no more intended to offer a sacrifice than did Abraham, who when confronted by visitors said, "Rest yourselves under the tree, while I fetch a morsel of bread, that you may refresh yourselves" (Gen. 18:4, 5).**

In order to justify this distorted interpretation the Douay Version has rendered Genesis 14:18, "But Melchisedech the king of Salem, bringing forth bread and wine, *for* **he was the priest of the most high God." But the Romanist translators do not hesitate to translate the same Hebrew word which they render "for" by the word "and" in other places.**

We are indebted to the Hebrew letter for virtually all that we know of the nature and character of Melchizedek and his priesthood. Since that letter was written to prove that the order of Melchizedek was superior to that of Levi, and the subject was priesthood, it would have bolstered the argument immensely to have established that Melchizedek offered a sacrifice of bread and wine in type of the Lord's death on Calvary, and the memorial which he ordained of that event. However, when the apostle records the connection of Melchizedek with the father of the Jews, he merely says that he "met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him" (Heb. 7:1). There is no hint in the Holy Scriptures that he offered a sacrifice of bread and wine, so we must put this down as a figment of imagination conjured up to support a questionable practice.

The words of Malachi (1:11) are said to be "a divinely inspired prophesy concerning that clean oblation, the holy Sacrifice of the Mass." But the mass is nowhere mentioned in the New Covenant writings which constitute our only source of information relative to the fulfillment of prophecy concerning the kind of sacrifices which God will honor. In Peter 2:5 it is distinctly said that God's holy priesthood will offer up *spiritual sacrifices* **acceptable to God. Accordingly every child of God is required to present his body "a living sacrifice" (Rom. 12:1). In the Hebrew letter, which more than any other deals with sacrifice, we are urged, "Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name" (13:15). In Malachi 1:11 the expression "my name" is used by the Lord three times, and the reason assigned for incense and a pure offering in every place is "for my name shall be great among the heathen, said the Lord of hosts." Is it not logical to believe that the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name constitute the offering and incense to which Malachi makes reference?**

To this argument the Romanists file two objections. They demand to know how the fruit of our lips in hallowed praise can

be an antitype of incense and sacrifice. We reply with the words of David, "Let my prayer be counted as incense, before thee, and the lifting up of my hands as an evening sacrifice" (Psa. 141:2). In the vision which John beheld he saw "golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints" (Rev. 5:8). We conclude then that these represent a fulfillment of the prophecy of Malachi, and that there is no room here for arbitrarily asserting that the ancient prophet was speaking of the mass.

The second objection to our interpretation is that the word *"mincha"* **translated "offering" in the passage by Malachi, always means literal sacrifice and cannot be applied to a figurative or spiritual sacrifice. This objection is invalid as evidenced in Isaiah 66:20, where** *mincha* **twice occurs in one verse, and the first time must be employed in a figurative sense. "And they shall bring all your brethren from the nations** *as an offering* **to the Lord . . . just as the Israelites bring their cereal** *offering* **in a clean vessel to the house of the Lord."**

We have demonstrated that in the New Testament plan there is a priesthood and there are sacrifices. As to the altar, the apostle affirms "We have an altar from which those who serve the tent have no right to eat" (Heb. 13:10). So Christ did not "found a church and make no provision for a priesthood to offer sacrifice." He did not "fail to institute a priesthood which would continue in all ages the work He had begun." He did not "launch His bark without captain or crew to guide it over the uncharted waters of the centuries yet to come." He is the captain of our salvation (Hebrews 2:10) and every member of the church is part of that crew. Every member is a priest and a minister. What Rome must do to substantiate her claim is to show that God ordained a captain, a crew, and a third class composed of *paying passengers* **who are on board not to serve, but to be served. It is here at the first attempt that Dr. O'Brien's thesis on a special priesthood breaks down, and his argument like an ill-manned vessel is left floundering. Let us notice his next argument.**

A STRANGE PROCEDURE

That Christ acted in this strange manner would seem to be the belief of our Protestant friends. For in their eyes the minister who preaches to them is clothed with no divine power. His authority comes solely from the congregation which employs him. He is like the artist who plays the organ, the secretary who keeps the books, and like them is dismissable at the will and caprice of the congregation which hires him.

That Christ did not act in the strange manner above described, founding a Church but failing to make any provision for its perpetuation through a definite ministry, has been the constant belief of the Church which He founded. The Church teaches that Christ not only instituted the priesthood but conferred upon it clearly specified powers and authority. It is inconceivable to her that a divine Being, Jesus Christ, would found a Church to minister to the spiritual needs of mankind in the succeeding ages without establishing a ministry and conferring upon it the power and authority necessary to enable the church to fulfill her divinely appointed mission. Such is the procedure which both reason and common sense would lead us to expect.

Such is the procedure which the New Testament shows us Christ *actually* followed. It tells us that Christ selected twelve Apostles and ordained them His first priests. Upon them He conferred the power of ordaining others to continue their work. The sacrament by which men are ordained and receive the Power and grace to discharge the duties of the priestly office is Holy Orders.

It is apparently inconceivable to the priestly writer that a church may exist without a special priesthood claiming dogmatic authority or a hired minister subject to the whims of his employers. Yet, strange to say, no New Testament congregation ever hired a man as the minister to preach to them. Such a thing as hiring and firing the minister was as unknown to the

primitive churches, as playing an organ in the public worship expressions of the church. The scribe is more nearly correct than he realized, when he states of the hired minister, "He is like the artist who plays the organ." That is true, for neither the hired minister nor the organ player is found in the scriptural description of the church which was purchased by the blood of our Lord.

Christ did not found a church and fail to provide for its perpetuation through a definite ministry, but that definite ministry is composed of all of the saints. True, there are bishops over each local congregation of disciples to shepherd them, and deacons in each local congregation to attend to the care of the needy ones, but these are chosen from among the membership by the whole multitude of believers, and there is no higher position of authority than to be one of several bishops of a local congregation. A plurality of bishops over one church is clearly taught in the Sacred Scriptures; one bishop over a plurality of churches is not taught therein.

The writer makes two expressions synonymous. They are "instituting a priesthood" and "establishing a ministry." Jesus Christ did this very thing, but the ministry and priesthood he established are universal as related to Christians, and not confined to a sacerdotal group as Rome would have it. It is observable that the author says, *"The Church* **teaches that Christ not only instituted the priesthood but conferred upon it clearly specified powers and authority." We do not have time, space nor inclination at this point to argue the right of "the church" to teach, but suffice it to say, we have definite logical grounds for respecting the revelation of God as the only authoritative teaching on matters of religious interest. We shall demand and expect a "Thus saith the Lord" as a proper criterion for judging the worthiness of any doctrine affecting our spiritual welfare.**

Dr. O'Brien affirms that the procedure which he defends is shown by the New Testament to be the one which Christ actually

followed. It is here the battle can be properly joined. It is true that Christ selected twelve apostles, but it is not true that he "ordained them His *priests"* in a special sense. That they were special ambassadors of the absent King, the Bible teaches (2 Cor. 5:29), but that they were high priests, or even *higher* priests, than the remainder of the saints, is not true. They became priests of God, not by ordination, but by acceptance of our Lord and obedience to His commands This is true of every child of God.

The apostle upon whom Rome relies the most is Peter. It seems as if the Holy Spirit, in view of the unprincipled use to be made of this apostle by a modern priestcraft, selected him to be the one to declare in unmistakable language the great doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. Peter shows that everyone who comes to the "living stone rejected by men" becomes in turn "a living stone" built into a holy priesthood. Thus to become a priest is conditioned only upon coming to Christ (1 Peter 2:5). God's priests are those who are "chosen and destined by God the Father and sanctified by the Spirit for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood" (1 Peter 1:2). The apostles shared "the priesthood" with every other citizen of heaven's rule, for that realm is "a kingdom of priests."

Rome not only demands a belief in "seven sacraments" but even in the ritualistic forms attendant upon the administration of them. "I also profess, that there are truly and properly seven sacraments of the new law, instituted by Jesus Christ, our Lord, and necessary for the salvation of mankind, though not all for everyone: To wit, Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Orders and Matrimony, and that they confer grace; and that of these, Baptism, Confirmation, and Orders, cannot be reiterated without sacrilege. And I also receive and admit the received and approved ceremonies of the Catholic Church, used in the solemn administration of all the aforesaid sacraments" *(Ordo Administrandi Sacramenti,* **page 65).**

The Lord Jesus Christ did not institute confirmation, penance, extreme unction, matrimony, or holy orders. Matrimony was ordained in the primeval garden when God ordained that a man should leave father and mother and cleave unto his wife. This was four thousand years prior to the advent of Christ into the world. Although Christ ordained or appointed the apostles and the seventy, he instituted no formal ceremony of outward ritual. Even great Roman Catholic historians have been forced to admit that "ordination is not truly and properly a Sacrament."

Did the Apostles Have "Priestly Powers"?

Contents

The apostate church, in order to establish the claim of the hierarchy, seeks to prove that the apostles were granted three "priestly powers." Reasoning from their assumption that the modern priests are successors to the apostles, they then claim for them these special powers. We shall examine these claims as given in the booklet *"The Priesthood: A Divine Institution."*

THE FIRST ORDINATION

> **It was instituted by Christ at the Last Supper, when after consecrating the elements of bread and wine into the Holy Eucharist, He said to the Apostles: "Do ye this for a commemoration of me." (Luke 22:19) The Council of Trent declares: "If anyone says that by these words: 'Do ye this for a commemoration of me,' that Christ did not constitute the Apostles priests, or did not ordain that they and other priests offer His body and blood, let him be anathema."**
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> **At the Last Supper, Jesus Christ, the High Priest of the New Law according to the order of Melchisedech, fulfilled the promise which He had previously made to the Apostles, that He would give them His flesh to eat and His blood to drink. He instituted as a permanent and official act of worship the Eucharistic Sacrifice which He had just offered. In commanding the Apostles to do what He had just done, He gave them the power which that act entails, namely, the power to consecrate. In authorizing them to**

offer the self-same Sacrifice which He had instituted, Christ made the Apostles and their successors the sharers of His eternal priesthood.

By the expression "consecrating the elements of bread and wine into the Holy Eucharist" the writer means according to the doctrine of transubstantiation that the bread and wine were changed into the literal body and blood of Christ. The Council of Trent, to which reference is made, says, "Canon I.— If any one shall deny that the body and blood together with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore entire Christ, are truly, really, and substantially contained in the sacrament of the most holy Eucharist; and shall say that He is only in it as in a sign, or in a figure, or virtually— let him be accursed."

I deny that the bread and fruit of the vine were the literal flesh and blood of our Lord, when he instituted the memorial, for the simple reason that he was standing there in the flesh, and with the blood still in His body, when he gave the elements to the apostles. Since "blood is the life of the flesh," then if the elements were actually His body and blood, there were two Christs present at the final Supper— one a literal, living Christ, the other a dead Christ. But an anathema is pronounced upon one who denies that the soul of Christ is not actually in "the Eucharist." If "the soul and divinity of Christ" were "truly and really contained in the sacraments" they could not at the same time be truly and really contained in his body standing before the apostles. But a body is dead when the soul is not in it, therefore the living Christ would have had to be dead, and the dead Christ would have had to be living.

But both Jesus and the apostles refer to the elements in the same fashion after "consecration" as before. In Matthew 26:27, 29, "He took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them saying, 'Drink of it, all of you' . . . I tell you I shall not drink again of this *fruit of the vine* **until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." Paul declared that he**

received of the Lord the information he delivered to the Corinthian congregation relative to the Lord's Supper. He declared that Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke it and said, "This is my body which is for you." Yet in 1 Corinthians 11:26, 27, 28 the apostle shows that what was eaten was still bread and not flesh.

The Council of Trent is cited as authority for the idea that by the expression "Do ye this for a commemoration of me," Christ constituted the apostles priests to offer His body and blood. We reject the resolution of this council as having no authority whatsoever. Since the work of the Council of Trent was not concluded until 1563, when its decrees were ratified by Pope Pius IV, that council came 1500 years too late to carry any weight with the true children of God.

But do the words of Christ imply that he was commissioning a special priesthood to offer an unbloody sacrifice? Far from it. The Lord's Supper is a feast, not a sacrifice; it is observed at a table, not an altar; it is eaten, not offered up; it is a communion of a congregation of priests, not an oblation of priests for a congregation. Jesus did not tell the apostles when he ordained the feast "I appoint unto you an altar at which you may officiate," but he did say at that time "As my Father hath appointed a kingdom for me, so do I appoint for you that you may *eat and drink at my table in my kingdom"* **(Luke 22:30). The apostle Paul in connection with the teaching about the Lord's Supper, declares, "You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot** *partake of the table of the Lord* **and the table of demons" (1 Cor. 10:21). We conclude then that the expression "Do this in remembrance of me" does not refer to official authority to sacrifice at an altar, but to the partaking at a festival board of those emblems of our Lord's sacrifice** *once far all.* **As proof of this interpretation of the words of our Lord, we cite the fact that Paul delivers the same charge to the whole congregation, and explains them by saying, "For as often as ye eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the**

Lord's death until he comes" (1 Cor. 11:26). Thus our Lord meant that we should all eat and drink in memory of Him, and that is all He meant. It is here that the decretals of the Council of Trent and the whole philosophy of Romish priestcraft come tumbling down.

Dr. O'Brien, following the regular line of argument used by the Romanists through the years declares that at the last supper, Jesus fulfilled the prior promise to the apostles that He would give them His flesh to eat and His blood to drink. This is a direct reference to the teaching of our Lord as recorded in John, chapter six, and which the Catholic Church makes applicable to "the Eucharist."

Jesus said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him" (John 6:52-56). Our Lord did not here refer to the commemorative supper as we shall demonstrate.

It will be agreed by all that the language employed must be accepted as literal or figurative. The Catholic position is that it is literal in import. If this be true, no Catholics except the priests have life, for Jesus said, "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man *and drink of his blood,* **you have no life in you," and the common members are not allowed to drink the cup. Their reply is that the blood is in the wafer, but if it is, they cannot drink it, for when they have finished the** *act of eating* **there is nothing left of the wafer. And if the blood of Christ is in the wafer, why does the priest drink the cup? Jesus affirms that he who eats his flesh and drinks his blood has eternal life and will be raised by Him at the last day. If this is to be taken literally, then all who partake of "the Eucharist" will be saved, a thing which Rome denies.**

But the context demonstrates that the expression is used figuratively, and has to do with digesting the doctrine and imbibing the spiritual system of teaching, of our Lord. On the previous day, Jesus had fed a multitude of five thousand with two fish and five barley loaves taken from a lad, and the miracle had so affected the people they were about to take Him by force and coronate Him as king. Jesus withdrew, and crossed the sea to Capernaum. The multitude followed Him, expecting to be fed again the next day. Jesus told them that they had sought Him, not because of His power, but because they ate their fill of the loaves. He exhorted them to "not labor for the food which perishes, but for *the food which endures to eternal life,* **which the Son of man will give to you."**

The hungry mob, still anxious for further food, asked for a miracle such as Moses performed saying "Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" When Jesus pointed out the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world, they asked to be fed by such bread always. Then comes a significant statement. Jesus said to them "I am the bread of life; he who *believes in me* **shall never thirst" (John 6:35). Thus, the hunger is satisfied by** *coming to Christ;* **the thirst is satisfied by** *believing in Christ.* **Eating the flesh of the Son of man is equivalent to embracing His tenets; drinking the blood of the Son of man is equivalent to trustful obedience to His will.**

That this is a correct view is demonstrated by an occurrence after the lesson delivered in the Capernaum synagogue. Many of his own disciples, not comprehending the spiritual bearing of his message, said "This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?" Jesus said, "Do you take offense at this? . . . It is the spirit that gives life, the flesh is of no avail, *the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit and life"* **(John 6:61-63). Thus, the expression "he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life" means simply that he who comes to Christ, and believes on Him, in obedience to His word, is made a partaker of**

His life, i.e., of His flesh and blood. Again the priestly thesis breaks down.

Our Lord did not institute as a permanent and official act of worship "the Eucharist sacrifice which he had just offered." He instituted a festal table at which every child of God would eat until His return. It is not true that "In commanding the apostles to do what He had just done, He gave them the power to consecration." He merely instructed them to eat and drink in memory of His death. Note too, that all who received the bread, received the cup. Jesus did not at the final supper "authorize them to offer the self-same sacrifice" or any other sacrifice. He ordered them instead to eat and drink at His table— the very opposite of sacrifice. Thus, Rome loses her argument for the first of "three priestly powers." She will lose the others as well.

OTHER PRIESTLY POWERS

> **Christ completed the communication of His priesthood to the Apostles, when a few days later, he conferred upon them the other strictly sacerdotal power of forgiving sins. On that first Easter Christ appeared to His Apostles and said to them: "As the Father hath sent me, I also send you. When he had said this, he breathed on them: and he said to them: *Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained."* (John 20:21-23)**
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> **The Apostles regarded themselves henceforth as ministers of reconciliation. Thus St. Paul writes to the Corinthians: "God hath reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation . . . For Christ, therefore, we are ambassadors; God, as it were exhorting through us." (II Cor. 5:18-20) In other words God sends Christ to reconcile sinners; Christ sends us. We are His ambassadors of mercy to sinful men, divinely commissioned to cleanse and heal them.**

The statement of our Lord is plain, unequivocal and positive. It is undeniable that he gave the apostles the right, privilege or authority to forgive sins. But notice that he did not tell them at the same time how they were to do it. This does not mean we cannot know how they were to accomplish it, for our Lord told them they would receive the Holy Spirit who would guide them unto all things. We need only consult the record of their acts thus to know how they were to forgive and retain sins.

There are but three ways of forgiveness for sins mentioned in the New Testament, as follows: (1) Actual forgiveness; (2) Declared forgiveness; (3) Legislative forgiveness. If we can determine which of these the apostles taught and practiced, after having received the Holy Spirit which was to guide them into all truth, we shall know what our Lord meant when He said, "Whose sins you remit, they shall be remitted."

Did the apostles claim to have the power to *actually* forgive sins? Instead of making such a claim, they taught the very opposite. When Simon attempted to purchase the gift of God with money, Peter said unto him, "Repent therefore of this wickedness of yours and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you" (Acts 8:22). If Peter believed in the power of absolution as taught in the Romish "sacrament of penance" he could have demonstrated it here. Instead, he pointed to God as the only one who could actually *forgive* sins. John declared, "If any one does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1). This is far different than saying, "If any man sin we have the sacrament of penance." Rome says that a certain form of absolution is essential and must be pronounced, but nowhere do the apostles make any such allegation. They deny by their practice that Jesus conferred upon them the power to actually forgive sins. This belongs exclusively to God.

Did the apostles exercise a declarative power of forgiveness? That our Lord possessed such power while on earth

is quite easily demonstrated. When a certain paralytic was brought to him, he said to the cripple, "Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven" (Matt. 9:2). When the scribes who observed this act of mercy said among themselves that Christ was blaspheming, Jesus perceiving their thoughts said, "Which is easier, to say 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of man has *authority on earth to forgive sins,"* **he then said to the paralytic, "Rise, take up your bed and go home." When the crowds saw the man do this, they were afraid, and glorified God who had given such authority to men. Did the apostles have the same authority? Did the statement that they could remit sins, confer the ability to declare such sins remitted as was the case with Christ? If so, the New Testament is absolutely silent about it, and with no testimony on the matter, we can neither affirm nor believe it.**

Since there are but three methods of forgiveness revealed in the New Testament, and since the apostles did not employ either of the first two, it is a compelling conclusion that our Savior referred to legislative forgiveness in His statement to them. This means that the apostles were to reveal a law, by compliance with which, the guilty sinner would receive actual forgiveness from God for sins committed. The apostle Paul declares, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8:2). From this we learn that we are set free from sin by a law. "You who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness" (Rom. 6:17, 18). Freedom from sin is not obtained by an "absolvo te" pronounced by a priest but by obedience to the standard of teaching.

Rome has much to say about Peter. Let us notice the plan by which this apostle proposed remission of sins to the guilty ones on the day of Pentecost. When they demanded to know what to do, "Peter said to them, 'Repent, and be baptized every

one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins'" (Acts 2:38). Here is the first announcement of the law by which forgiveness of sins may be secured. It is not by an exercise of sacerdotal authority, but by compliance with the terms specified by the apostle, speaking under the influence of the Spirit.

The priestly advocate quotes 2 Corinthians 5:18-20, to make it appear that the ministry of reconciliation is manifest in a sacerdotal power to absolve, but a close examination of the previous chapter will disclose that the apostles "having this ministry by the grace of God . . . by the open statement of truth we would commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God" (2 Cor. 4:1-3). It is by a statement of the truth, by the proclamation of the terms conveyed by heaven that the sins are remitted. No man possesses the authority to actually or declaratively forgive sins. The second pillar supporting the theory of a special priesthood is thus torn from its moorings. Surely that theory is built upon the sand. Now let us proceed to consideration of the third alleged support.

THIRD GREAT POWER

> **The third great power which Christ conferred upon His priests is that of preaching the gospel with authority. While this is not so distinctively a sacerdotal power as that of celebrating Mass or of forgiving sins, it is nevertheless a mark of divine delegation which sets them off from the laity. This power of teaching in His name Christ conferred upon His first priests when He said to them: "Going, therefore, teach ye all nations . . . teaching them to observe all things, whatever I have commanded you. And, behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world" (Matt. 28:19, 20).**
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> **The right of the priests to preach the gospel with authority entails upon the laity the correlative obligation in the following explicit manner: "He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and**

he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me." (Luke 10:16)

We have seen that such a "distinctively sacerdotal power as that of celebrating mass or of forgiving sins" was not conferred upon men as Rome teaches, and now we shall learn that "preaching the gospel with authority" is not "a mark of divine legislation which sets them (priests) off from the laity." In a previous chapter we have shown that all of God's people (laity) are a part of the royal priesthood (1 Pet. 2:9, 10). Instead of divine legislation setting priests apart from the laity, it was divine legislation which made no distinction. God made men and women; Satan made *clergymen,* **and clergymen made** *laymen!*

It is true that our Lord gave the commission to the apostles to "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19). The means of enrolling such students is found in the kindred statement, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation" (Mark 16:15). God never commissions a man to do anything without either supernaturally qualifying him to do it, or providing a means by which he may qualify himself naturally to do it. It would be foolish to assume that God would commission a man to do that which was absolutely impossible to accomplish, then condemn him for not doing it. Since the apostles were directly commissioned to teach all nations, it was necessary that they be endued with the ability to speak in the language of every creature. That they were so qualified to be witnesses "unto the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8) is evident from the fact that on the day of their original proclamation, they "began to speak in other tongues" so that "devout men from every nation under heaven" each heard them speaking in his own language, or native dialect (Acts 2:4-8). No one can directly operate under "the great commission" today. This commission was given to "witnesses" (Luke 24:46-48). A witness is one who testifies to facts with which he is conversant. No one today can bear the testimony of these apostles. We can assert our faith in their testimony, and we may re-proclaim that which they

testified, but their testimony was as peculiarly their own as their commission to announce it to the world. They fulfilled that commission and accomplished their task, consequently had no successors to their office.

The relationship of the apostles to the church was not personal but *official,* and in this relationship they were to continue to the end of the world. The office of apostles is still in the church, else it has no foundation. All Christians on earth, all members of the household of God are "built upon the foundation of the apostles, and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief cornerstone" (Eph. 2:20). The apostles are even now in authority, for our Lord said, 'When the Son of man shall sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. 19:28). The apostles occupy the position of authority in *the kingdom of Christ.* "As my Father appointed a kingdom for me, so do I appoint for you that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Luke 21:28).

The commission was not given to the twelve as disciples, but apostles. They fulfilled it by announcing the terms of reconciliation to the entire world, then sealed their testimony with their blood. But there is a difference in the basis of persecution of an ordinary martyr and an apostle. The first dies because he believes what he has heard; the other because he knows what he has seen. Our Lord said to Paul, " I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you to serve and *bear witness to the things which you have seen,* and to those in which I will appear to you" (Acts 26:16). When the apostles personally completed their work of giving to the world as ambassadors of the Great King, the terms of the treaty in full, the commission was accomplished. They have no successors in office, not simply because no one today can possess the miraculous powers which they needed to confirm their testimony, but because their work of apostleship was completed.

Men now must obtain faith through the testimony of the apostles, just as they did while the apostles were alive. If disputes arise in the congregations we must still "go up to consult the apostles" about the matter. Their revelation is still the criterion by which to measure every act of spiritual significance. Jesus is with them to the end of the age, by maintaining the authority of their teaching, while this world stands. It is true the men are dead but their authoritative teaching remains and we must continue as steadfastly "in the apostles' doctrine" today as on the birthday of the church. When the rich man in Hades besought Abraham to send Lazarus to warn his brothers lest they also come into torment, Abraham said, "They have Moses and the prophets: let them hear them" (Luke 16:29). Moses and the prophets had been dead for hundreds of years. In what sense did they have them? The reply must be in their authoritative utterances as recorded in the Old Covenant scriptures. In the same sense we have the apostles in their authoritative record of the New Covenant scriptures.

No one is an authoritative proclaimer today as were the apostles. The commission to the apostles is indivisibly connected with miraculous power. After Jesus upbraided the apostles "for their unbelief' (Mark 16:14) he gave them the commission to "Go into the whole world and preach the gospel to the whole creation." To strengthen them in the tremendous task involved he continues "And these signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick; and they will recover." To prove that this was connected with the commission as given, the context shows that "they went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them, and confirmed the message by the signs that attended it" (Mark 16:20). He who operates under authority of the great commission today, should be called upon for his miraculous credentials.

That Rome believes in miracles we do not deny, but that she does not believe that every parish priest possesses power to work miracles is evidenced from the lengthy examination she prosecutes to determine if "miracles" were performed as a prelude to canonization, and the few priests who are designated as saints. Those who claim to be successors to the apostles are convicted as usurpers. Every child of God has a divine right to reproclaim the good news; no one has a right to proclaim it authoritatively. This was reserved for the chosen ambassadors, the holy apostles, and their office has no successors because it was never abdicated. The statement "He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me" was made to the twelve and to them alone. It has no application to a misguided assumptionist who today calls himself "father" in direct antithesis to the teaching of our blessed Lord.

Rise of the Hierarchy

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Those who scan the labored attempts of the Roman scholastics to justify their system of priesthood cannot help observing how flimsy is the rational foundation for such a gigantic superstructure. Although affirming that it is based upon God's revelation in the New Covenant scriptures, the defendants must make forced applications of passages wrested from their context, and even then resort to a statement of probabilities. Far from proving that the special priesthood was ordained by Christ and his holy apostles, the chief appeal is to the so-called "fathers," many of whom lived long years this side of the apostles when "the mystery of lawlessness" which already worked in Paul's day, reached its fruition.

"DO YE THIS . . ."

> **It seems most probable from the evidence afforded by the New Testament that Christ ordained the Apostles priests and empowered them to offer the Eucharistic Sacrifice with no special ceremony but with the simple words: "Do ye this in commemoration of me." Here, as in the case of many of the other sacraments, Christ after instituting the sacrament left it to His Church to determine the matter and form, the precise manner in which the sacrament was to be conferred upon subsequent recipients.**
>
> **This was apparently determined shortly after the sacrament was instituted. For St. Luke in the Acts of**

the Apostles and St. Paul in his epistles mention all the elements of the sacrament, namely, the external symbolic rite of the imposition of hands and prayer, the internal grace thus communicated, and the institution of the sacrament by Christ. Thus St. Luke writes: "These (the seven deacons) they set before the Apostles, and they praying, imposed hands upon them." (Acts 6:6) "Then they, fasting and praying, and imposing their hands upon them (Paul and Barnabas) sent them away." (13:3)

Paul and Barnabas ordained priests to carry on their ministry among colonies of newly converted Christians, while the two Apostles moved on to new fields. "And when they had ordained to them priests in every church, they commended them to the Lord, in whom they believed." (14:22) St. Paul warns Timothy that the sacrament of Orders is to be conferred only on those candidates who give every assurance of fitness for the holy priesthood, saying: "Impose not hands lightly upon any man." (1 Tim. 5:22).

The priest, in an attempt to justify his "sacrament of the holy orders" starts with the expression "it seems most probable." But it is neither probable nor possible that Christ ordained the apostles priests in the sense he refers to, for to do so would be to render ineffective the kingdom of priests, composed of all whose sins were washed away by his blood (Rev. 1:5, 6). We have already learned that the Lord's Supper is a festal observance, participated in by all of God's priests, and not a sacrifice offered by a special priesthood. The congregation was not left to determine "the precise manner in which the sacrament (of orders) was to be conferred," for the word of God knew nothing of any such "sacrament."

In Acts 6:6, the seven who were selected and appointed as deacons were already "priests of God." Paul and Barnabas were also "priests of God" and were merely given public recognition as having been chosen for a special evangelistic mission, as those who read of their subsequent journey will learn. When they

again arrived in Antioch "where they had been commended to the grace of God for *the work which they had fulfilled"* **(Acts 14:26) they gathered the church together and declared all that God had done with them.**

Paul and Barnabas did not ordain priests in newly planted congregations. The original word which is mistranslated "priests" by the Roman Catholic version is the Greek "presbuteros" which literally means "an aged person." The word for priest is "hiereus." Nothing can be more palpably misleading than the deliberate translation of a word to justify a practice; thus changing the Bible to suit a human system, rather than changing such a system to suit the Bible. To prove this grave charge I cite the very book of Acts, from which Dr. O'Brien quotes.

There were both "priests" and "elders" among the Jews. Since Rome translates the word "presbuteros" (an aged man) by the term priests in Acts 14:22, what does she do when the words for both "priests" and "elders" occur in the same verse? Notice the Douay Version at Acts 5:23: "And being let go, they came to their own company, and related all that the chief priests (archiereis) and ancients (presbuteroi) had said to them." In Acts 23:14, the Douay Version reads: "Who came to the chief priests (archiereusin) and the ancients (presbuterois)." In Acts 25:15, "When I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests, and the ancients of the Jews, came unto me." Why did the translators from the Latin Vulgate not render the above by "chief priests *and priests"?* **They knew it was obvious that there were both priests and elders among the Jews, and an arbitrary translation of priests for "presbuteros" would be easily detected. Therefore they translated it by the word "ancients," which can be and is used in both an official and non-official sense in the New Covenant scriptures. Why then did they not translate Acts 14:22 in conformity with their translation elsewhere, to read: "And when they had ordained to them ancients in every church, they commended them to the Lord in whom they believed"? Rome**

had to get her priestcraft, in, even if she violated all laws of interpretation and forfeited all claims to consistency. Of such fragile, fanciful tissue is the great fabric of priesthood woven.

In 1 Timothy 5:22, Paul says nothing about "the sacrament of Orders." He is not even dealing with the appointment of men to office. The entire context shows that the subject is discipline of unworthy elders and not appointment of worthy ones. Read 1 Timothy 5:19-22, where, after Timothy is instructed to admit no charge against an elder, except on evidence of two or three witnesses, he is told to "keep these rules without favor, doing nothing by partiality" and is instructed in connection therewith, "Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, nor participate in other men's sins," which is but another way of saying, "Do not be hasty in administration of rebuke and discipline and lay yourself liable to a charge of rash judgment; neither be so slow as to be guilty of tolerating and condoning the sins of the guilty." One must not conclude that every time the expression "lay hands on" occurs, that it refers to ordination to office. It certainly does not convey that meaning in Acts 4:3, where the Jewish rulers came upon Peter and John "and *they laid hands on them,* **and put them in prison until the next day."**

MERE OFFICEHOLDERS

> **Some non-Catholic writers have contended that the distinction between clergy and laity arose solely from the need of maintaining good order in the Church and that the priests were mere officeholders deriving their authority from the congregation. Such a contention is contradicted by the unanimous voice of Christian antiquity. From the earliest days we find express reference in the writings of the Fathers to bishops, priests and deacons, as indeed we do in the Acts of the Apostles and the epistles of St. Paul.**
>
> **St. Clement is explicit: "Christ is from God, and the Apostles from Christ. Preaching from city to city and**

throughout the country, the Apostles appointed their first converts, testing them by the Spirit, to be bishops and deacons for the future Christians." (Ad. Cor., 43:2). He administers a severe rebuke to the Christians of Corinth for daring "to dismiss from the ministry those who had been placed in office by the Apostles or their successors with the approval of the whole Church." (44:3).

Here is a non-Catholic writer who contends that there is no hint of a distinction between "clergy and laity" in the New Testament. The argument between Catholics and Protestants over the origin of the distinction is of no interest to one who is neither Catholic nor Protestant, but merely a humble Christian. We have before demonstrated that all of God's people (laity) are his clergy (lot or inheritance). The distinction between the two which now exists in both Catholicism and Protestantism is without divine warrant, and is one of the marks of those of whom our Lord spoke, "Their heart is far from me; in vain they do worship me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men" (Matt. 15:8, 9). There is just as much scriptural authority for a pope as for a Protestant clergyman— and there is none!

That the "early fathers" may make reference to "bishops, priests and deacons," we will not deny, but that the *grandfathers,* **the apostles, make any such distinction as Rome makes we emphatically deny. Nowhere in the Acts of Apostles, or in any of the writings of Paul, is the Greek term for priest, translated with any clerical bearing, as pertains to the Christian church. It is strange that Dr. O'Brien does not cite the passages in Acts or the Pauline epistles substantiating his claims.**

The quotation from Clement does not prove what the priestly advocate wishes it to prove. Certainly the apostles appointed "bishops and deacons" in each congregation. But they did not appoint *"bishops, priests, and deacons."* **The bishops were also called elders, pastors, presbyters, overseers, and shepherds. A plurality of such pastors were ordained in every congregation (Titus 1:5; Acts 14:23). The congregation at Philippi was**

composed of "saints with bishops and deacons" (Phil. 1:1). Clement shows that such officers were placed in office by the apostles, "with the approval of the whole church." This is one "father" that Rome should be very quiet about, for the things he writes are in exact opposition to those which Rome practices. Where is the authority of this quotation from Clement for one priest over each parish, and a bishop over a multitude of churches?

A HIERARCHY

> **I have before me the citations of many early Fathers showing a clear recognition by the infant Church of the priesthood as a divinely established office, for the reception of which the sacrament of Orders was instituted. Space permits but the following one from St. Gregory of Nyssa (395) who reflects the mind of all the early writers. "The same power of the word," he says, "renders sublime and honorable the priest, who, by the newness of Ordination, has been singled out from the multitude; he who was yesterday one of the people suddenly becomes a commander, a presiding officer, a teacher of righteousness, and the dispenser of hidden mysteries." (Orat. in Rapt. Christi).**
>
> **The Council of Trent declares that there is in the Catholic Church a divinely established hierarchy of bishops, priests, and deacons, and that bishops are superior to priests and possess the power of confirming and ordaining. (Sess. 23. Canons 6, 7.) Since Christ established the priesthood as a permanent institution He certainly conferred upon some priests, namely, bishops, the power of communicating the priesthood to others. It is evident from the New Testament that the Apostles were bishops, for it depicts them frequently as ordaining, which is the function characteristic of bishops. The episcopate is the completion of the priesthood.**

The citations given do not show a clear recognition "by the

infant churches of the priesthood as a divinely established office." Only two authorities are quoted. The first is Gregory of Nyssa who lived 350 years after the church was established, and had already departed from its original pattern. A graduate of the catechetical school at Alexandria, he had absorbed the allegorical interpretations and bold speculations of Origen who was formerly head of the seminary. The quotation given does not show what the infant church thought, but represents the views current in the days of Gregory of Nyssa, long after the Nicene creed was written. If the priest wished to show what the infant church believed, why did he not quote from the New Testament scriptures? An infant that is 359 years old is quite a lusty youngster.

The second authority mentioned is the Council of Trent, which was convened by Pope Paul III in 1545, and after several disputes and adjournments, was again assembled by Pius IV, Jan. 8, 1562. Its twenty-five sessions constituted so many debates in which the decrees were passed by a majority of the delegates, of which the Italians were more numerous than all of the other nations together. The above citation from the twenty-third session of this group holds no authority for a Christian. We are interested in a "Thus saith the Lord," and not a decree of a human synod passed by a majority vote. The witnesses being worthless, the testimony offered relative to "A Hierarchy" is also worthless.

It is not evident from the New Testament that the apostles were bishops. Paul, who ordained elders, was not a bishop, for among the qualifications he lists as essential to a man desiring the office of a bishop, one requirement was that he be "the husband of one wife" (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:6). Paul was not a married man (1 Cor. 7:8; 9:5). There is not one iota of proof that "the function characteristic of bishops" is ordaining. The word bishop means "an overseer, a superintendent." One might fulfill his function as a bishop and never ordain anyone. Dr. O'Brien is arguing from modern Catholicism backward, instead of from

New Testament Christianity forward. The Roman Catholic hierarchy is without a divine leg upon which to stand. It is a mushroom growth of an ecclesiastical seed, planted in hierarchical ambition, fertilized by superstition, and nurtured on pride.

SUPERIORITY OF EPISCOPATE

> **St. Ignatius of Antioch (98-117) describes the three orders of bishops, priests and deacons, and points out clearly the divine origin of the episcopate and its superiority over the priesthood. "The college of presbyters," he writes, "adheres to the bishop as the strings to a lyre." (Ad Eph., 4:1) "Where the bishop is, there let the multitude (of believers) be; even as where Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church." (Ad Smyr., 8:2)**

The so-called Apostolic Fathers are Clement, Barnabas, Hermas, Ignatius, Polycarp and Papias. Of these, Ignatius was the first to even suggest the idea of the Episcopate. Enroute to a martyr's death he is alleged to have written seven letters addressed to Ephesians, Magnesians, Trollians, Philadelphians, Smyrnaeans, Romans, and to Polycarp. The above quoted portions are from the first and fifth of these epistles. In addition to these, an excerpt from the letter to the Magnesians, reads, "Your bishop presides in the place of God, and your presbyters in the place of the assembly of the apostles. Ye are nothing without your bishop."

One is made to question why Ignatius is forced to go to such extravagant lengths in defending the office of the bishop. Is it because that office was a newly invented one, which the disciples were reluctant to recognize? Why did Ignatius not cite the teaching of the holy apostles to bolster his contention? The answer is that the apostolic writings know nothing of "the bishop."

Even so, there are several things which Rome might well consider in the writing of Ignatius. In spite of the fact that his letters indicate a well-defined deviation from apostolic teaching, it is noticeable that there is no trace of episcopal authority extending beyond a single community or congregation. The idea of a bishop over numerous churches, or a diocese, was not known as yet.

Neither does Ignatius rest the idea of episcopal authority on the same ground as that which Rome now attempts to defend it. The contention now is that the bishops are successors to the apostles, but Ignatius clearly assigned that status to the presbyters. Of the seven epistles acknowledged by Eusebius, there are two Greek recensions, a longer and shorter one, with the latter generally accepted as genuine. In both of them several glosses are apparent and it is evident they have suffered from alterations. To what extent they may be authentic is questionable, but in any event, they are not inspired and cannot be a true measure of God's plan for the congregations of saints.

CELIBACY OF THE CLERGY

> **"Why don't priests marry?" is one of the questions most frequently asked by non-Catholics. The celibacy of the clergy is not a precept of the divine or natural law, nor a dogma of the Catholic Church. It is simply a disciplinary regulation of the Western Church, imposed with a view to the more effective discharge of the priestly duties and a closer approximation to the ideal of our great High Priest, Jesus Christ. "He that is without a wife," says St. Paul, "is solicitous for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please God. But he that is with a wife is solicitous for the things of the world, how he may please his wife; and he is divided." (I Cor. 7:32, 33)**
>
> **During the first three centuries there was no law of the Church enforcing celibacy. Clement of Alexandria speaks of married priests and deacons, and the historian Socrates refers to a married episcopate in the Eastern**

Churches. To this day the secular clergy in the Greek Catholic Church, that is, the Church in communion with Rome, are married, though the bishops are celibates. In short, it is not a question of dogma, but solely of ecclesiastical discipline. On this particular point of discipline there exists a difference, between the Church of the West and that of the East, though both are united in the acceptance of the dogma proclaiming the divine origin of the priesthood.

Inasmuch as the above has nothing to do with the subject of the origin of special priesthood, it requires but little attention. It is plainly admitted that celibacy of the clergy is not a precept of divine or natural law, therefore it originated as an arbitrary regulation of the hierarchy. It needs to be remarked that on one hand Rome raises matrimony to the rank of "a sacrament"; then refuses it to her clergy. She first exalts it in a sense which He does not justify. It is still true that marriage is to be held "in honor among all" (Heb. 13:4), and that one symptom of apostasy is manifested "through the pretensions of liars whose consciences are seared, who forbid marriage and enjoin abstinence from foods" (1 Tim. 4:2, 3).

A SUBLIME OFFICE

Having presented the evidence from Scripture and the writings of the early Fathers as to the divine origin of the priesthood and its essential powers, let us now briefly consider the dignity of the office, and the benefits which accrue to human society from its exercise. The priest is singled out by God who chooses him to be His ambassador to men. The words which Christ addressed to the Apostles at the Last Supper may be applied to all His priests: "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you; and have appointed you, that you should go, and should bring forth fruit; and your fruit should remain." (John, 15:16). It was this same divine teaching which St. Paul reechoed when he declared to the Hebrews: "Neither doth any man take the honor to himself, but he that is called by

God, as Aaron was." (Heb. 5:4).

> **The priest is called by God not only into the line of Aaron, into the tribe of Levi, into the family of Samuel, into the priesthood of Melchisedech, but into the discipleship of Jesus Christ. He is made a member of that goodly company of disciples whose sound has gone forth unto the ends of the earth. Throughout nineteen hundred years they have borne the teachings of the Divine Master into every race and every land from the frozen snows of the Arctic to the burning sands of the Sahara, and even unto the far distant shores washed by the waves of the Australasian seas.**

We might well stop our review at this juncture seeing that the very first sentence of the above has been proven false. We have examined the evidence from Scripture and the early fathers, and found it not only inconclusive in sustaining Rome's postulate, but actually opposed to the idea of the divine origin of a special priesthood. Since the office exists without heavenly warrant it is a usurper in the religious realm, and can only do ultimate harm instead of good to society from its exercise.

No one living today is an ambassador of God, a minister plenipotentiary. The words which Christ spoke to his chosen ambassadors *as apostles* **apply to no other persons. That which he spoke to them as** *disciples* **may apply to all disciples as such, but the apostolic commission and regulations apply exclusively to eye witnesses of Jesus Christ, which the priests today cannot possibly be. The statement of Paul in Hebrews 5:4 which the writer quotes, has direct reference to our Lord, as the following verse indicates, "So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest but was appointed by him" (i.e. God). The God of heaven did not appoint parish priests as he selected Aaron and Christ.**

Perhaps no greater collection of Romish trivia could be found in the same space than that which asserts the Catholic

priests are "called into the line of Aaron, into the tribe of Levi, into the family of Samuel, into the priesthood of Melchisedech, into the discipleship of Jesus Christ." It is evident that those who are in the "tribe of Levi" cannot serve God under the Christian dispensation as special priests, because there has been "a change in the priesthood, and necessarily a change in the law as well" (Heb. 7:12). Our Lord who was of the order of Melchizedek was not of the line of Aaron, the tribe of Levi, or of the family of Samuel. "For the one of whom these things are spoken belonged to another tribe, from which no one has ever served at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, and in connection with that tribe Moses said nothing about priests" (Heb. 7:13, 14).

Now in order to have their robes, incense, holy water, anointing oil and unbloody sacrifices, the Romish priests have to claim "the line of Aaron, and the tribe of Levi." But if they do that, they must give up the priesthood of Melchizedek (Heb. 7:11). If they claim the priesthood of Melchizedek they must surrender all of their pomp, pageantry and ritual, for these belong to the Levitical priesthood. They cannot claim to be members of both for if so they have no connection with our high priest, seeing He was not of the line of Aaron, or the tribe of Levi. The whole truth is that the Romish priests are neither of Levi nor Melchizedek, but represent spiritual parasites, fungus growths upon the religious world. The desperate attempt to find scriptural justification for the existence of this ignoble hierarchy must end in despair.

The Power to Pardon

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It is possible for a priest in the great religio-politico institution designated the Roman Catholic Church to utter words of truth. He may have an unscriptural motive in his statement, or he may intend an application foreign to that conveyed by his words, but the statement as made may be factual. A good example is the following:

CHRIST IS WITH THEM

> **"Behold!" said Christ, "I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world." With these words echoing in their ears, the Apostles went out into the countries of the then known world, preaching the gospel fearlessly to every creature. They quailed not before the lions in the Roman arena, nor before the pitch and tar with which they were to be burned alive to illumine the gladiatorial contests of the Romans. Why? Because they realized that they were speaking not in their own names, but in the name of Jesus Christ. Because they realized that they were His divinely appointed ambassadors, clothed by the Master with plenipotentiary power to speak and teach in His name. That is why St. Paul was able to say with truth: "Let a man so regard us as ministers of Christ and dispensers of the mysteries of God." (I Cor. 4:1).**

The paragraph as quoted is absolutely correct, but the application to a modern priestcraft is not correct. We endorse the statement just as it stands, because it is proven to be true by

both the word of the Lord and history. But the Romish priests are not the successors of the apostles and any attempted application of the statement to them is delusive and deceptive.

POWER OF PARDONING

> **The second great power of the priestly office is that of pardoning. When the priest raises aloft his right hand and pronounces the words of pardon over the sinner in the tribunal of confession, the shackles are torn from the soul of the penitent. The priest pardons as effectively as if the words fell from the lips of Christ. It is a power which transcends that of kings and emperors. The power of kings is over the bodies of men. But they stand impotent before the kingdom of the soul. The hand of the priest reaches up beyond the horizon of the sky, and with golden keys unlocks the treasury of God's mercy and forgiveness and applies them to the souls of men.**
>
> **The priest preserves inviolate the secrecy of the confessional even at the cost of life itself. Under no circumstances does he ever reveal the slightest imperfection breathed into his ear in confession.**

The theory of Rome is that the secret confessional is a court of justice, over which the priest presides as jurist, jury, attorney and executioner. To this court the penitent comes, discloses his acts and receives his sentence, or pronouncement of innocence.

Bossuet, the Bishop of Meaux, in his *Exposition,* **page 33, said: "We believe that Jesus Christ has been pleased that those who have submitted themselves to the government of the Church by baptism, and who have since violated the laws of the Gospel, should come and submit themselves to the judgment of the same Church,** *in the tribunal of penance,* **where she exercises the power which is given her, of remitting and retaining sins (Matt. 18:18, John 20:23). . . . This penitential court of justice being so necessary a curb to licentiousness— so plentiful a source of wise**

admonition— so sensible a consolation of souls afflicted by their sins, when their absolution is not only declared in general terms, but when they are in reality absolved by the authority of Jesus Christ, after a particular examination and knowledge of the case."

This Catholic authority states that there is a tribunal of penance, that it constitutes a court of justice, that here violators submit to the judgment of the church, and absolution is granted by the authority of Christ, and such absolution is given only after examination of the case. Thus, each parish priest is judge and jury, and from his decision no appeal can be made. He is a *local* **priest but the** *supreme* **court.**

To sustain our statement we quote from *Grounds of Catholic Doctrine,* **page 22: "Christ has made the pastors of His Church His judges in the court of conscience, with commission and authority to bind or loose, to forgive or to retain sins, to the merits of the cause and the disposition of the penitents. Now, as no judge can pass sentence without having a full knowledge of the cause, which cannot be had in this kind of causes which regards men's consciences, but by their own confession, it clearly follows, that He who has made the pastors of the Church the judges of men's consciences, has also laid an obligation upon the faithful to lay open the state of their consciences to them, if they hope to have their sins remitted."**

The confession booth is thus a secret court in which a man probes the conscience of another and passes sentence upon the victim of error. Such a thing is unknown to the Holy Scriptures. But what passages are twisted and wrested to uphold auricular confession?

One is James 5:16, about which *Grounds of Catholic Doctrine* **has this to say: "'Confess therefore your sins one to another,' that is to the priests or elders of the church, whom the apostles ordered to be called for (verse 14)." An examination of**

the passage does not prove what Rome would like for it to prove. It is against auricular confession to a priest. In the first place, the elders are not priests in an official sense. After James gave instruction to call the elders in under certain circumstances, he does not say to confess your sins unto them, but rather, "Confess your sins one to another, and pray for one another." When one disciple of the Lord confesses his sin to another, it is one of God's priests confessing his error to another of God's priests, but the confession is mutual, just as the prayers are to be.

Another passage cited by Rome is Acts 19:18: "Many also of those who were now believers came, confessing and divulging their practices." Instead of this being a secret confession whispered in privacy in a secluded booth, it was an open acknowledgment of practices which had previously been indulged, but which were now discovered to be in contravention of divine precepts. That this is true, is further suggested by the next verse which says, "And a number of those who practiced magical arts brought their books together and burned them in *the sight of all.***" Every text which Rome adduces for her confessional will be found under close scrutiny to apply to public confession and not to private or secret confession to a human tribunal.**

The statement, "The priest pardons as effectively as if the words fell from the lips of Christ" borders upon blasphemy. It is a pretentious, proud and arrogant assertion, but it is without any authority from God. Nowhere do the holy apostles ever hint at such a tribunal as that about which Rome prates. When the incestuous member at Corinth was determined to be guilty, the whole congregation when assembled, acted upon his case; when he repented the whole congregation was instructed to forgive and comfort him. But their forgiveness was for the reproach brought upon the congregation, and consisted of a remission of their own censure as evidenced in the act of formal exclusion from the group. Fornication is a sin against God and can only be forgiven by God. But, if auricular confession was the means of

obtaining pardon, why did Paul not advise this both to the congregation and the penitent? If the apostles had such power, why did they not once refer to it? John declares, "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1). He does not say, "If any man sin, we have a judicial tribunal in which one may confess and receive absolution."

The hand of a priest can reach no higher than that of any humble supplicant. He has no golden key that is not afforded unto all alike. Every child of God is invited to "Have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way which He opened for us through the curtain of His flesh, and since we have a great high priest over the house of God, let us draw near with true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water" (Heb. 10:19-22). The golden key belongs to every immersed believer, for every such person is "a priest of God." Any special priest who claims exclusive right to unlock the treasury of God is a usurper and a pretentious despoiler of God's citizenry.

SEAL OF CONFESSION

> **The sacrifice which every Catholic priest stands ready to make to preserve this trust inviolate is illustrated by the following historical incident. In 1899 Father Dumoulin, a French priest, was charged with the crime of murder. The sexton had murdered and robbed a wealthy woman. To throw suspicion from himself he dipped the smoking revolver in the woman's blood and placed it in Father Dumoulin's room. Then to seal the lips of the priest, he went to confession to Father Dumoulin, accusing himself of the murder.**
>
> **Circumstantial evidence pointed to the priest. Knowing how secure he was behind the sacramental seal, knowing that the priest could not open those lips to reveal**

the guilty person even to save his own life, the sexton gave testimony convicting the priest. He was given a life sentence worse than death— life imprisonment at hard labor on Devil's Island under the tropical sun, whither France sends her worst criminals. Suffering the loss of his good name, the ostracism of his friends and a public ignominy that was more painful than death itself, Father Dumoulin, like the good priest that he was, remained faithful to his trust.

For twenty-five years he toiled under the burning rays of the tropical sun among the outcasts of mankind, guarding ever the secret in his bosom. In those twenty-five years he saw his mother die of a broken heart, carrying to her grave the blight of her son's imprisonment. Twenty-five years of grinding convict toil had left him with grey hairs, a face deep lined, a body broken and bent, on the edge of the grave.

CLEARED AFTER 25 YEARS

In a wretched hovel in a slum district in Paris a man lying on a bare cot is calling hysterically for a priest before he dies. As the priest enters, he shouts aloud: "I am guilty of the murder for which Father Dumoulin was condemned. I sealed his lips with confession and threw the guilt on him." Unwilling to face his God with that foul crime upon his soul, he seeks forgiveness through the very agency of confession whose inviolable secrecy he perverted to convict an innocent priest.

What a tardy retribution that could not undo those twenty-five years of mental torture, that could not recall the dead from their graves, nor reveal to them his innocence. And yet that is precisely what every priest in Christendom would willingly undergo rather than reveal the tiniest venial sin breathed into his car in confession. Such is the absolute, impenetrable and inviolable secrecy with which a priest guards the contents of every confession.

This purely prejudicial material has not one thing to do with the issue. The title of the booklet by Dr. O'Brien is "The Priesthood: A Divine Institution." Does the fact that a priest refuses to reveal secrets breathed into his ear prove that the priesthood of Roman Catholicism is divinely ordained? Does it prove that auricular confession is an institution of heaven? Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, the condemned Communistic traitors, went to their death without revealing a single secret concerning their conspirators. Would this prove that Communism is a divine institution?

Can that be a divine institution which prompts men to lie and even do so under a solemn oath? Yet "the seal of confession" does just that. This is proven by an excerpt from the work of Rev. Peter Dens, D.D., on "*The Nature of Confession and Obligation of the Seal,***" as translated by the monk of La Trappe, E. Zosinius. At a meeting of the Roman Catholic prelates in Ireland, held on September 14, 1808, it was agreed that Dens' "***Complete Body of Theology***" was the best book extant on the subject. Let us note these quotations from it.**

"What is the seal of sacramental confession?"

Answer: **"It is the obligation or duty of concealing those things which are learned from sacramental confession."**

"Can a case be given in which it is lawful to break the sacramental seal?"

Answer: **"It cannot, though life be forfeited, or a commonwealth be destroyed."**

"What answer, then, ought a confessor to give when questioned concerning a truth which he knows from sacramental confession only?"

Answer: **"He ought to answer, that he does not know it, and, if it be necessary, to confirm the same with an oath."**

To deliberately falsify, and then to ask God to witness the lie as truth is certainly taking His name in vain. Yet we are asked to believe that such a system is heroic, courageous and commendatory. But the whole truth is that "the seal" can be broken. Liguori, the famed Catholic historian, quoted so frequently by Alexander Campbell in his debate with Right Rev. John B. Purcell, Bishop of Cincinnati, declares that "the seal" must not be broken lest the confession be rendered odious, but he also says that the confessor may secure licence of the penitent, and that such licence may be granted in writing or orally. Since the Roman Catholic is taught to regard the priest as God in the confessional, it is evident that to refuse to submit to a demand for such licence would be to fight against God, in his superstitious mind.

The writer mentions "the sacrifice which every Catholic priest stands ready to make to preserve the trust inviolate." Such a sacrifice does not prove that the truth itself is worthy. It may demonstrate the belief of the priest in his trust, and even show the consistency with which he views it, but that still does not establish the righteousness of the trust. The fact that a man is willing to die for a thing, does not prove the thing itself is true, although it may demonstrate that *he believes it* to be so. Men, like Horatius, might die as willingly for pagan gods, as Christians would for the true and living God.

"Then outspake brave Horatius,

The captain of the gate:

To every man upon this earth

Death cometh soon or late.

And how can man die better

Than facing fearful odds

For the ashes of his fathers

And the temples of his gods?"

No account of suffering upon the part of a priest can establish the scripturality of auricular confession. It is a miserable imposture spawned during the darkest days of the world and religion, when the sun of intellect hid her face because of the pollutions of a profligate priesthood. It became a dogma and an obligatory practice of the Roman Church at the Lateran Council, in 1215 A.D., under Pope Innocent III. Not one trace of it, as a dogma, can be found prior to that year.

St. John Chrysostom, from whose celebrated works, Rome loves to quote, said in his homily on Psalm 50: "We do not request you to go confess your sins to any of your fellow-men, but only God."

In his Homily V, *De incomprehensibili De natura,* **Vol. 1, he says: "Therefore I beseech you, always confess your sins to God! I, in no way, ask you to confess them to me. To God alone should you expose the wounds of your soul and from Him alone expect the cure. Go to Him, then, and you shall not be cast off, but healed. For, before you utter a single word, God knows your prayer."**

It is questionable whether the priest undergoes any more mental torture than that which is suffered by a refined and modest woman who must be subjected to questioning and prodding relative to her innermost thoughts, and who is forced to disclose to a bachelor, the most intimate feelings she may not even mention to her own husband. The confessional box is a throne of priestly control where a man sits who has his finger on the pulsing heart and throbbing conscience of every member of a domestic circle, and who claims the very authority of God in releasing or retaining sins.

The Power to Consecrate

Contents

It is in her claim that the priest has the power to consecrate, that Rome indulges in the language of blasphemy, claiming that the priest is equal in power to our Lord and speaks in the very voice of God. "Consecration" as Rome uses the term has to do with the alleged power to transmute the elements of bread and fruit of the vine into the actual body and blood of our Lord.

The Council of Trent declared: "By the consecration of the bread and wine a change is wrought of the bread's whole substance into the substance of Christ our Lord's body, and of the wine's whole substance into the substance of His blood, which change has been by the Holy Catholic Church suitably and properly called Transubstantiation" (Session 13, Chapter 4).

In explanation of this language, Rome says: "By the substance of bread we mean its very essence, that internal, invisible something which, itself devoid of color, shape, weight, taste, etc. supports the qualities or accidents which are perceived by the senses. Transubstantiation therefore, means that when Jesus Christ, at the Last Supper, pronounced the words, 'This is my body; this is my blood,' the Son of God by His omnipotent power transubstantiated or changed, the substance of the bread and wine into His living flesh; so that no bread or wine whatsoever remained, but Himself, body, blood, soul and divinity, under their appearances. So in like manner, every day at Mass, the priest, acting in the name of Christ pronounces the

same words, and God effects the same change" *(The Question Box,* **Conway, page 417).**

POWER OF CONSECRATION

> **The third great power of the priestly office is the climax of all. It is the power of consecrating. "No act is greater," says St. Thomas "than the consecration of the sacred body of Christ." In this essential phase of the sacred ministry, the power of the priest is not surpassed by that of the bishop, the archbishop, the cardinal or the pope. Indeed it is equal to that of Jesus Christ. For in this role the priest speaks with the voice and authority of God himself.**

Since it is affirmed that this is a great power belonging to the priestly office, and that it represents the grand climax of all sacerdotal demonstrations, it will be in order for us to investigate it to the extent our limited space will allow. Rome not only teaches that the bread is the real body of our Lord and the cup is His real blood, but she demands under threat of anathema that her superstitious followers also believe that each particle of bread when separated, and each drop of the wine, is in itself *the entire Christ.*

The Council of Trent says: *"Canon* **3:— If any one shall deny that the venerated sacrament of the Eucharist, entire Christ is contained in each kind, and in each several particles of either kind, when separated, let him be accursed." If the consecrated bread became divided into ten thousand crumbs, each crumb would in and of itself be the entire Christ or if the consecrated fruit of the vine became separated into uncounted drops, each drop would be the entire Christ.**

And if this were not too much for those who were nurtured on the pap of gullibility and blind credulity, the Catholic must also believe that he crunches between his teeth the very bones and nerves of the Son of Man. "Not only the true body of Christ,

and whatever appertains to the true mode of existence of a body, and the bones and nerves, but also that entire Christ is contained in the sacrament."

Upon what foundation does this monstrous fabrication, with all of its ramifications, find rest? Upon the simple words of our Master, "This is my body; this is my blood," and the instruction, "Do this in memory of me." How did the apostles understand these words? They were all Jews, who knew it was contrary to the law to drink the blood of animals, much more human blood. They were rigorous in their observance of the law with reference to eating *the flesh* of only certain kinds of animals. They would have abhorred the very idea of cannibalism, the eating of human flesh, bones and veins. Yet, not a word escaped their lips upon this night. The impetuous Peter asked no question about the Lord's statement. Surely they knew that the living and real Christ was giving them only a memorial consisting of two elements. They did not believe that the living Christ took His literal body, and dividing it into the numerous parts, made of each a literal and *entire Christ.*

Can the words upon which Rome stakes so much, be understood figuratively? If I hand you a photograph saying, "This is my mother," do you conclude that I mean that the piece of sensitized photographic paper is my mother in a literal sense? If I walk through a public park with a friend, and he points to a statute, saying, "This is George Washington," do I suppose that he means the piece of bronze is the literal general of the Revolutionary Army? Did Jesus ever use symbolic language with reference to himself? He said, "I am the vine" (John 15:1). Shall we conclude that he was transmuted into a grapevine, and that each twig when separate was the *entire Christ?* **He said, "I am the door" (John 10:9). Did he infer that he was a literal door?**

Even Rome has difficulty in explaining her position, insomuch that some of her outstanding scholars recognize the problem. The Catholic bishop, Tonstal, admitted: "Of the

manner and means of the real presence, how it might be either by transubstantiation or otherwise, perhaps it had been better to leave any one, who would be curious, to his own opinion, as before the Council of Lateran it was left" *(The Eucharist,* **Book 1, page 46).**

Cardinal de Alliaco said: "That manner and meaning which supposeth the substance of bread to remain, is possible; neither is it contrary to reason, nor to the authority of the Scriptures, nay it is more easy and more reasonable to conceive, if it could only accord with the Church."

The very language of the apostle detailing the observance of the feast, proves that it is a memorial for one *who is absent,* **and not a recognition of the bodily presence of that person. The expression, "Do this in remembrance of me" surely points to the fact that the one thus commemorated is not present. Why should one do something in** *remembrance* **of Jesus, if the** *real Christ* **is present in body, blood, bones and nerves? Moreover, we are told that in eating and drinking, we "proclaim the Lord's death** *until he comes.***" Does this not indicate that He has not already literally come? If the real Christ is upon the altar, and visible to the communicants, as Rome teaches, how can the priest explain the term "until he comes"?**

In the very same connection which Rome declares Jesus consecrated the bread and wine by saying, "This is my body; this is my blood," He also took the cup saying, "This cup *is the new testament.***" He did not say that it represented or adumbrated the new testament. He said it was the new testament. Is this to be taken literally? Rome does not believe so. She accepts it as a figure of speech. By the same identical reasoning, we accept what our Lord said about the bread and fruit of the vine figuratively.**

The host (bread) is made of wheat flour and water and is unleavened. It is baked with heat. Rome teaches that when the

priest utters the words "Hoc est corpus meum" this unleavened bread is converted into the real Christ. Thus a god is produced by the work of men's hands, and men bow and acknowledge the host is "God over all" when it is elevated by the priest. This is contrary to the revelation of God, which amply shows that nothing can become God which is made with men's hands. Demetrius said, "You see and hear that not only at Ephesus but almost throughout all Asia this Paul has persuaded and turned away a considerable company of people, saying that gods made with hands are not gods" (Acts 19:26).

The prophet Isaiah condemns those who "bow down to the work of their hands, to what their own fingers have made" (2:8). The sweet psalmist of Israel declared,

"The idols of the nations are silver and gold,

The work of men's hands" (Psalm 135:15).

The Romish priest cannot deny that the wafer which he presumes to consecrate is made by the hands of men, and that he teaches that it is converted into very Christ and is worshipped as God.

> **When the priest pronounces the tremendous words of consecration, he reaches up into the heavens, brings Christ down from his throne, and places Him upon our altar to be offered up again as the victim for the sins of man. It is greater power than that of monarchs and potentates. It is greater than that of saints and angels, greater than that of Seraphim and Cherubim. Indeed it is greater even than the power of the Virgin Mary. For, while the Blessed Virgin was the human agency by which Christ became incarnate a single time, the priest brings Christ down from Heaven, and renders Him incarnate on the altar as the eternal Victim for the sins of man— not once but a thousand times! The priest speaks and lo! Christ, the eternal and omnipotent God, bows His head in humble obedience to the priest's command.**

The above paragraph is a positive denial of the truth as revealed in God's Word. It is a clear demonstration of the extent to which a boastful priestcraft will go to delude and deceive a superstitious following. Let us note the fallacious reasoning in the boastful assertions.

Does the priest "reach up into the heavens, and bring Christ down from His throne?" The inspired apostle declares, "The righteousness based on faith says, Do you say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' (that is to bring Christ down)" (Rom. 10:6). Surely, according to Roman Catholic admission, they do not have the righteousness which is based on faith. Jesus was elevated to His throne by the power of God. Shall he be removed from it by the power of men? "We have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven" (Heb. 8:1). Now Christ cannot be on His throne, if he is brought "from His throne" by every Catholic priest; He cannot be in heaven if He is "brought down" by one who "reaches up into the heavens." But since our "hope that enters into the inner shrine behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf" (Heb. 6:19, 20) is predicated upon His remaining "exalted above the heavens" (Heb. 7:26) no Roman Catholic can have the hope of eternal life during the time that the priest is "consecrating the Eucharist."

Can the priest place Christ "upon an altar to be offered again as the victim for the sins of men?" We answer in an emphatic negative. Such a preposterous theory gives the lie to the whole plan of God. To justify her special priesthood, Rome has to run counter to the divine scheme of the ages. Jesus Christ is no longer "a victim for the sins of man." "He has no need, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people; he did this *once for all* **when he offered up himself" (Heb. 7:27). Christ is not a daily victim; He does not have to suffer repeatedly. He does not require to be sacrificed daily for sins. "Nor was it to offer himself** *repeatedly,* **as the high priest enters the Holy Place yearly with**

the blood not his own; for then he would have had to suffer *repeatedly* **since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared** *once for all* **at the end of the age to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb. 9:25, 26).**

Notice the word "again" in the priestly language which says, Christ is "offered up *again* **as the victim for the sins of man." Here is a good place to hinge the controversy between the false claims of Rome and the truth of heaven. Roman Catholicism teaches that Jesus must be offered again— "not once but a thousand times." The Bible says, "But when Christ had offered for all time a** *single sacrifice* **for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, then to wait until his enemies should be made a stool for his feet. For by a** *single offering* **he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified" (Heb. 10:12-14). Rome says "***again***"; the Bible say "only once." Rome says "***a thousand times***"; the Bible says "a single sacrifice for all times."**

The boasted power over monarchs, potentates, saints and angels, is nothing but a myth, a fictitious fancy of a fertile, ingenious priestcraft, to make serfs and vassals of their fellowmen. "Priestcraft in all ages and all nations has been the same; its nature is one and that nature is essentially evil; its object is self-gratification and self-aggrandizement; the means it uses— the basest frauds, the most shameless delusions, practiced on the popular mind for the acquisition of power; and that power once gained, the most fierce and bloody exercise of it, in order to render it at once lawful and perpetual. Nothing is so servilely mean in weakness, so daring in assumption, so arrogant in command: earth, Heaven, the very throne and existence of God himself, being used as but the tools of its designs, and appealed to with horrible impudence in the most shameless of its lies." (*History of Priestcraft in All Ages and Nations,* **by William Howitt, pages 14, 15).**

Does Christ "bow His head in humble obedience to the priest's command"? Such insolence should cause every humble

member of the Roman Catholic Church to tremble in every fiber at the thought of upholding such a blasphemous institution. God raised Christ from the dead "and made him sit at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come; and he has put all things under his feet and has made him head over all things for the church" (Eph. 1:20-22). Our Lord bows His head at the command of no man. He is the Commander, not the commanded. He is not to humbly obey the dictates of any man, but all men must humbly obey His dictates.

The sacrifice of our Lord has been made. It cannot be repeated. Once He was crucified; now He is glorified. Once He was humiliated; now He is exalted. He cannot be humiliated again. "Being found in human form He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth" (Phil. 2:8, 9). The idea that a man on earth can reach up to heaven and take Jesus from His throne, and once more debase Him as a victim for sins, is horrifying to one who really believes in God. Truly it can be said, "They then commit apostasy, since they crucify the Son of God on their own account and hold him up to contempt" (Heb. 6:6).

The *Roman Missal* **says, "If the priest vomit the Eucharist, if the species appear entire, let them be reverently swallowed, unless sickness arise: for then let the consecrated species be cautiously separated and laid up in some sacred place, till they are corrupted; and afterwards let them be cast into the sacrarium"** *(Roman Missal,* **Mechlin, 1840). If you remember that the Romish teaching is that the consecrated bread is** *entire Christ,* **the abominable thought that Christ may be vomited up by a priest, who must thereupon rescue Him from the vomit and swallow Him again, unless nausea results, whereupon the entire**

Christ is to be fished out of the mess and laid up until corrupted, should be enough to turn the stomachs of all believers. Even the Pagan Roman soldiers did not subject the body of God's Son to more profane treatment than that required of the Romish priests.

As a further degradation, the common members of the Catholic Church were given the prayer which follows: "May thy body, O Lord, which I have received, and thy blood which I have drunk, cleave to my bowels, and grant that no stain of sin remain in me, who have been fed with this pure and holy sacrament. Who liveth and reigneth forever and ever. Amen." Is it possible that the literal body of our Lord should cling to the bowels of a man on earth, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth?

> **Of what sublime dignity is the office of the Christian priest who is thus privileged to act as the ambassador and the vicegerent of Christ on earth. He continues the essential ministry of Christ— he teaches the faithful with the authority of Christ, he pardons the penitent sinner with the power of Christ, he offers up again the same sacrifice of adoration and atonement which Christ offered on Calvary. No wonder that the name which spiritual writers are especially fond of applying to the priest is that of "alter Christus." For the priest is and should be another Christ. The priesthood is a sublime ministry, more meet for angels than for weak and sinful men. Truly indeed did Isaiah proclaim with prophetic insight six hundred years before Christ the grandeur of the Christian priesthood in these inspired words: "How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings and that preacheth peace; of him that showeth forth good, that preacheth salvation, that saith to Sion: Thy God shall reign" (Isaiah 52:7).**

We have shown by indisputable testimony that Romish priests are not ambassadors or vicegerents of Christ. We have established it as factual that they are not authoritative teachers,

they cannot pardon sinners, and cannot offer up the sacrifice of Christ. These are the foundations of the hierarchical priestcraft, and we have swept them all away. Any power claimed by the priests on the basis of the Catholic contention is usurpation, and without divine warrant. Every child of God is a priest. Any person claiming special sacerdotal powers is a religious counterfeiter.

The priest is not "alter Christus"— another Christ. There is one Christ. "Then if any one says to you 'Lo, here is the Christ!' or 'There he is!' do not believe it. For *false Christs* **and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders, so as to lead you astray, if possible, even the elect" (Matt. 24:23, 24). "For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth — as indeed there are many 'gods' and many 'lords'— yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist" (1 Cor. 8:5, 6).**

The apostle speaks of rebellion in which "the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God" (2 Thess. 2:3, 4). We deny that the priest is and should be "another Christ." This is the language of apostasy, a part of the bold effrontery with which men are silenced and the voice of conscience is stricken dumb. The words of Isaiah were not spoken of a covetous, pretentious and ambitious clergy, but of humble preachers of the gospel as shown by the fulfillment in Romans 10:14, 15. This is but another sample of the twisting of God's Word to justify an unholy and ungodly system by which men are exploited for gain.

Priesthood and Worship

Contents

It is the position of Rome that worship to God must be dependent upon a special clergy. This negates the purpose of God as respects the Christian dispensation, and takes the world back to the shadowy representations of the Jewish dispensation. It belongs to the "weak and beggarly elemental spirits" which enslave men (Gal. 4:9) and from which we were freed by Him who was "born of woman, born under the law."

ALTAR AND PRIEST

> **Is it not apparent to every person, regardless of religious affiliation, who has followed this discussion with an open mind, that the Christian priesthood is an institution founded by Jesus Christ whereby men receive the power and authority to preach the gospel, to reconcile sinners and to offer sacrifice to the Most High? When Luther discarded the office of the priesthood, the confessional as a tribunal for the reconciliation of sinners and the altar with its august Sacrifice of the Mass disappeared. Now in the churches of our separated brethren there remain but the four bare walls and a pulpit. While the highest element of worship, the offering of sacrifice has completely vanished, even the other elements of worship are fast disappearing. Listen to the words addressed by Dr. Edmund S. Conklin to the ministers of our country: "After no small amount of observation, reading, and careful inquiry, I am forced to the conclusion that worship as a religious exercise is**

disappearing from Protestant Churches." *(The Disappearance of Worship,* The Christian Century, July 11, 1934).

Is it not apparent that this decay of worship in the Churches of our non-Catholic friends is due primarily to their abandonment of the priestly office? Is it not also apparent that the great decline in church attendance deplored by ministers throughout the country is traceable to the discarding of the priesthood and the consequent disappearance of sacrifice and worship? More and more such churches are ceasing to be temples for the worship of God and are becoming lecture halls for the discussion of political, social and economic problems. But man does not live by bread alone. In the unfathomable depths of his nature, he strives now, as in the days of Cain and Abel and of Melchisedech, to offer sacrifice and worship to his God and Maker. Deep still calleth unto deep.

In the priesthood of the Catholic Church he will find a divinely established agency, through which that deep and ineradicable hunger of his nature will find adequate satisfaction. In that Church the searcher after truth will find not only preaching and prayer and the singing of hymns, but more than that— altar and priest, worship and sacrifice. For in the memory of the priest within that Church there echo the solemn words addressed by Jesus Christ to His first priests, the Apostles, at the Last Supper: "Do ye this in commemoration of me." In faithful compliance with that divine command, the priest offers up each day in all the countries of the world the august Sacrifice of the Mass saying the words of the psalmist: "I will take the chalice of salvation and I will call upon the name of the Lord."

We are sure that if the Romish priest could make mere assertion to act as positive proof his arguments would sound weighty and convincing. However, it must now be apparent to every person regardless of religious affiliation, that Jesus Christ founded no special priesthood possessed of the powers which are

claimed by the hierarchy. On the contrary even Roman Catholics who are honest, if they were permitted to read our dissertation, would conclude that the priesthood which lords it over their minds does so with no trace of scriptural warrant.

Men need not depend upon a clergy for power and authority to preach the gospel. This is an inalienable right of every citizen of the kingdom of priests. Rome claims that the apostles were the first priests and were so constituted to enable them to preach the gospel. But in Acts 8:1, we read that "a great persecution arose against the church in Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the region of Judea and Samaria, *except the apostles.*" **Verse 4 declares, "Now those who were scattered abroad went about preaching the word." If they were all scattered except the apostles, and it was those who were scattered who did the preaching, then it appears that "preaching the word" is the duty of every disciple.**

The apostles did not forbid this preaching by others or claim an exclusive right to do it. Instead "when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John." These two merely commended and confirmed the preaching done by non-apostolic labor. Nor can we help remarking that Peter did not do the sending. He was one of two men "sent by the apostles." Where is the vaunted papal authority about which Rome boasts for the "see of Peter"?

Again it is said, "Those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phenicia and Antioch speaking the word to none except the Jews. But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who on coming to Antioch spoke to the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number that believed turned to the Lord" (Acts 11:19-21). When news of this came to the ears of the Church in Jerusalem, they sent Barnabas to Antioch, not to forbid them to preach, for

"when he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad; and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose." The proclamation of the gospel message is not the right of an exclusive caste. "Let him that heareth, say, Come."

Martin Luther did not discard the office of priesthood. He merely restored the scriptural idea regarding it, and assayed to give it to its rightful owners. Luther declared, "It has been said that the pope, the bishops, the priests, and all those who people the covenants form the spiritual or ecclesiastical state; and that the princes, the nobility, the citizens, and peasants, form the secular or lay estate. This is a fine story. Let no persons, however, be startled at it. All Christians belong to the spiritual estate, and there is no other difference between them than that arising from the function which they discharge. We have all one baptism, one faith; and this it is which constitutes the spiritual man. The unction, the tonsure, ordination, consecration by the bishop or the pope, may make a hypocrite, but never a spiritual man. We are all consecrated priests by baptism, as Saint Peter says, 'Ye are priests and kings,' although it does not belong to all to exercise such offices, for no one can take that which is common to all without the consent of the community."

Certainly the restoration of the idea of a kingdom of priests, all of whom are upon an equality as pertains to priesthood, would destroy the idea of a tribunal of conscience in which one elevates himself to the place where he can assess penalties and act as a supreme judge over others. There is but one high priest, who alone is able to forgive sins, and unto Him appeal must be made. "There is one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy" (James 4:12).

As to the subject of the mass, Martin Luther said in the Augsburg Confession: "But as the mass, prior to this time, was abused in various ways; as it is clear, that an annual traffic was made out of it, that it was bought and sold, and that it was celebrated for the most part in all churches for the sake of

money, such abuse had been repeatedly censured, even before this time by individuals of learning and piety. Now, as the ministers among us have preached concerning this thing, and the priests have been reminded of the terrible menaces which should justly move every Christian, that whoever partakes of the Sacrament unworthily, is guilty of the body and blood of Christ (1 Cor. 11:27) in consequence of this, these sordid and solitary masses, which hitherto have been celebrated out of compulsion, for the sake of money and preferments, have ceased in our churches."

Philip Melancthon, brilliant young friend of Luther, in his "*Apology for the Augsburg Confession***" says: "Now, as no one under the Old Testament obtained remission of sins through the sacrifices, they having only signified the one sacrifice of Christ, it follows that there is only one offering, namely, Christ, who made payment and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. In the New Testament, consequently, there is no sacrifice to be made as a recompense for sin, except only the death of Christ, who was offered once upon the cross. When they therefore assert that under the New Testament there must be a priest to offer sacrifice, this can be conceded with reference to Christ alone. The whole Epistle to the Hebrews strongly urges and confirms this view. It would really be setting up another mediator besides Christ, were we to admit any other satisfaction for sin, or any reconciliation but the death of Christ."**

He further states: "Our antagonists cannot produce a particle of proof from the Scripture in confirmation of these dreams and fables, which they preach with the greatest assurance, although without the authority of the church or the Fathers. They are ungodly, perverse men, who knowingly reject and trample upon the plain truth of God." No wonder the reformatory movement aroused such a stir in men's hearts, with such courageous leaders in the vanguard of the army.

The statement regarding Protestants, that "in the churches

of our separated brethren there remain but four bare walls and a pulpit" deserves a few remarks. The dragon now speaks with the voice of a lamb. "Our separated brethren" of today were those branded as "infamous heretics" yesterday, and brutally treated and even killed by papal persecutions.

Dominus Dens says:

"Are heretics justly punished with death?"

Answer: **"Saint Thomas answers in the affirmative because forgers of money, or others, disturbing the republic, are justly punished with death. Therefore, also heretics who are forgers of the faith, and, experience being the witness, greatly disturb the republic."**

Pope Martin (1418) gave his approval to the Council of Constance in which heretics were condemned to be burned as "morbid sheep." Urban IV (1262) issued a bull for the appointment of officers to discharge the functions of the Inquisition against heretics. When Martin Luther laid down the proposition, "It is contrary to the will of God to burn heretics," Pope Leo X (1520) published a bull in which he condemned the proposition. Rome accommodates her tactics and methods to the time and place where she works. In an enlightened America with religious freedom, she becomes tolerant, and speaks of "our separated brethren," but in places where she is in the majority, she shows her true tyrannical and despotic nature. Rome always has an axe to grind, and she turns the political grindstone to throw sparks in whatever direction will accomplish her purpose.

Yet there is a hint even in the accusation of Rome that Protestantism does not represent the restoration of simple New Testament Christianity. In the primitive church no pulpit was found. The early Christians sat around a table, the modern congregation sits before a pulpit. The first disciples met to minister to each other, the present day disciples meet to be

ministered unto. For three hundred years the congregations owned no distinctive buildings, but met in upper rooms and in private homes. The familiar expression, "The church which is in thy house" was characteristic of the New Covenant epistles. In such simplicity was it necessary to have an elevated stand in each home? We do not condemn the use of a speaker's platform, but "the pulpit" has certain connotations. It has been borrowed from Rome by her "separated brethren" because they still have the false and unscriptural distinction between the clergy and the laity. The pulpit is the exclusive realm of a special caste. Humble saints are deemed unworthy of invading its sacred precincts unless by condescension, the priestly occupant invites one of the flock to share it with him to direct a prayer from its sacerdotal heights.

It is deemed a distinctive honor to "sit in the pulpit" by the side of "the minister." Mothers covet this glory for their sons, and simper with fawning gratitude when one of their offspring is invited to participate in the service. How tragic is this attitude which indicates so great a departure from the divine ideal of the regal priesthood with its absolute freedom of the platform protected for every faithful and able brother in the assembly of the saints.

Rome cannot conceive of a spiritual worship. She must walk by sight because she cannot walk by faith. She can no more visualize a congregation at worship without a visible, tangible altar and its officiating priest, than the Protestants can visualize a congregation at worship without a pulpit occupied by the minister. Yet the primitive church had neither of these. Both extremes are departures from the plan of God; both originated with and are perpetuated by the clergy. Neither system can restore to this world of sin the congregation as given by our Lord through His apostles.

Dr. Conklin is correct. Worship as a religious exercise is disappearing from Protestant churches. But it is not

disappearing due to the lack of a special priestcraft. It is disappearing because of the Protestant counterpart thereof, the clergyman. Worship is not now a corporate action of the body in which all engage. It is rather a special function relegated to a certain caste. It is now something performed for them. It is no longer religious worship, but a religious performance. The pulpit has become a stage on which polished actors present a dramatic performance for a stipulated fee.

The decay of Protestantism is not due to abandonment of the priestly office, but to the fact that a watered down version of it is still maintained. When the Romish priest speaks about "churches ceasing to be temples" he uses both words in a sense that no inspired apostle ever employed when talking about the kingdom of heaven. The word "church" was never applied to a material structure in the Sacred Scriptures; nor did God ever in the New Covenant sanction "a temple" made of wood and stone. The "house of God" is made up of living stones. The children of God do not go to God's house— they are God's house! We are "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord."

The priesthood of the Roman Catholic Church is not a divinely established agency. It can satisfy no real spiritual hunger, although it may serve to allay the fears of superstitious ignorance. It does not provide the bread of life, but stands between the hungry soul and Him who has that bread. It obscures the true meaning of God's altar and sacrifice, His priesthood and worship. The priestcraft of Rome is a burlesque upon God's holy provision, a deliberate attempt upon the part of sinful man to rob God's family of their paternal rights. It is destitute of divine authority, an arrogant usurper, and an unholy claimant of divine rights. May God deliver the people from this blight!

A Sincere Appeal

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When Ezekiel was carried a captive into Babylon, the city of Jerusalem was not yet destroyed. One day the prophet was sitting in his foreign house with some of the elders of Judah, when he saw a dazzling vision. A man appeared who took him by a lock of his hair, and the Spirit lifted him up between heaven and earth, and transported him in a trance to Jerusalem. There he was forced to look upon the idolatrous practices carried out in secret and also openly on the very porch of the temple (Ezek. 8). The city was almost wholly filled with worshippers of pagan deities.

As the prophet contemplated the wretched scene, he saw seven men approaching from the direction of the upper gate. Six of these held drawn swords, the seventh had a writing case at his side. They marched solemnly into the temple precincts and stood beside the bronze altar. A voice called out instructions to the man with the writing case, "Go through the city, through Jerusalem, and put a mark upon the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations that are committed in it." The other six were then ordered to pass through the city behind the first, and to slay outright, without pity, all who were not marked in their foreheads. They were told positively to "touch no one upon whom is the mark." And they were likewise told to "begin at my sanctuary."

We believe that idolatry, worldliness and apostasy characterize much of the religious world in these days. The

leaders are like the false prophets in the time of Ezekiel. "They have spoken falsehood and divined a lie, they say, 'Says the Lord,' when the Lord has not sent them, and yet they expect him to fulfill their word. Have you not seen a delusive vision, and uttered a lying divination, whenever you have said 'Says the Lord,' although I have not spoken?" (Ezek. 13:6, 7). Yet there must be in this Babylon of religion, hundreds of honest and humble hearts who sigh and groan over the abominations committed in the name of worship. Surely the invisible mark on the forehead has been made by the one whose finger wrote on the temple walls of Belshazzar. "The Lord knoweth them that are his." The judgment of God will be upon this idolatrous generation. That judgment will begin in his sanctuary.

The sectarian spirit of today can never achieve the ideal of God. It can never answer the prayer for unity of Him "whom having not seen we love." Division, schism and strife are perpetuated by the clergy. The common people sigh for unity. They do not want to hate their fellowmen, but they are taught prejudice, animosity and fear by leaders who segregate them with human creeds as barriers to prevent them from thinking for themselves. The early Christians belonged to no sect. They had no other creed but Christ. They were not fractured into divers groups, each with a top echelon of clergymen who exploited them for gain and manipulated them for political prestige. They were all a kingdom of priests unto God, and they recognized no high priest but the Son of God, now coronated King of kings.

Greed for money is at the bottom of much of our sad plight. Men make a profession of dispensing the water of life which God has freely given to all. They then inaugurate a special caste to minister in this profession and demand support from the rest of God's children. Others see an opportunity to make gain and seize power by instituting organizations to produce and train the professional clergymen. Theological seminaries operating as specialized colleges are begun and again a tax is

levied against the "clergy of God" to produce a special clergy which will steal the very privileges of those who pay tribute to this earthly handmaiden to produce them. Eventually the simplicity of God's original plan of priesthood becomes so obscure, that those who plead for a return to the old paths are derided, maligned and laughed to scorn.

Occasionally, men who love the cause of Christ and sigh for its purity rise up and sound the call to return to Jerusalem. The hearts of men are stirred for a brief time, and the weary marchers take up their burdens and face again toward the walls of Zion. But the love of popularity, the lust for pre-eminence, the desire for gain soon crush out the noble ambition, and once again a clever priestcraft under innocent titles takes over and the work bogs down in a morass of innovations.

L. F. Bittle, writing in *Apostolic Messenger,* **September, 1918, said: "And when we look at the various reformations that have been started, we see that they all follow the same general course. Beginning with an enthusiastic love of truth and a willingness to sacrifice even life on its behalf, they soon degenerate into formalism and selfishness. The reformers left their creeds to bind the minds of their successors, but they could not leave their spirits to stir their hearts. Rescued from priestcraft, their followers soon made a priesthood of their own to repeat in another form the follies and frauds of the past.**

"What has been called the Current Reformation is rapidly sharing the fate of its predecessors. The scriptural knowledge, the zeal for the primitive faith and order, the love and unity in the truth that characterized the earlier stages of the work, are passing away, and the desire to be like the sects around them is transforming the Reformers into a priest-led people who are hurrying down toward Babylon as eagerly as they once struggled up to Jerusalem. Such is the result of exchanging principle for policy and of adopting the suggestions of human wisdom instead of adhering strictly to the oracles of God. And

the folly and wickedness of the procedure appear the greater when we remember the Reformers had the mistakes of their predecessors to warn them of the danger of going beyond the things that are written."

If this generation is to see any rapid strides toward restoration of the New Testament order it must begin with the elimination of the whole clergy idea, under whatsoever name or system that idea is perpetuated. Labeling poison by a harmless name does not change its nature, but makes it the more dangerous. There must be a purging from our very thinking of a clergy system which is repugnant to God. The humble and saintly David King said in a paper which he read at the annual meeting of the churches of Christ, in Leeds (England) in 1876: "Nothing seems more opposed to the genius of the Christian system than the recognition of a class of professionals paid for preaching, as are lawyers for pleading, and doctors for prescribing, irrespective of need." In the same speech he also declared: "Paying one man to fill the pulpit with a view to keep up preaching and worship acceptable to a stated congregation, whether that man be called evangelist or pastor, almost invariably exiles New Testament order." Again he remarks: "I have done so much preaching and am therefore entitled to so much pay whether needed or otherwise is both illogical and a burlesque of Christian propagandism."

But how shall we rid ourselves of the burden of an unscriptural clergy system? That the task will be difficult let no one doubt. The first step must be a firm resolution to examine the sacred Scriptures by each child of God for himself. Everyone who loves God must not only seek to derive spiritual food for his own growth, but he must have then a compelling urge to share his learning with his brethren for their good. Restoration must always be preceded by reformation— of life, thinking, attitude and heart. Let the glorious liberty which is ours in Christ Jesus be again understood and cherished. Let anything which will steal that liberty and bring us again into bondage be so

obnoxious to us that we will not countenance even the faintest hint of it.

Men must reassert their right to "buy wine and milk without money and without price" (Isa. 55:1). They must resent with every moral fiber the idea of professionals "cashing in on the gospel" and selling back to them that which God gave equally to all mankind. They must be possessed of such an over-powering love for undying souls that they will all carry the glad tidings to loved ones, friends and neighbors. They must be willing to share in the problem of edifying the congregation both privately and "when the whole congregation is come together in one place."

It is not a question with real saints whether a thing will work or not. The only thing they question is whether or not it is God's will. If it is they must make it work. God's plan will work if we will work God's plan.

Many preachers are unwilling victims of a modern condition which they secretly detest and even openly question. They realize that the position which they occupy as "The Minister" in a local congregation is without scriptural warrant. Such men must through prayer and meditation strengthen their hearts and steel their convictions until they develop the courage to break away from tradition and cease to cater to that which will enslave the Church. This will require a tremendous faith, because of the adverse criticism, and the tug of so many considerations which may be sacrificed— money, power and prestige!

The wives of such gospel preachers will need to be saintly women. The feminine heart seeks security. There is a lure in a nice home made ready to the hands, in a regular check of ample proportions, in the social glory attending a profession. To turn one's back upon all such appeals and face the future is an acid test of fidelity to God. Yet in every age there have not been

wanting faithful women who have encouraged their men to "stand fast in the Lord."

All must be made to realize that the task of bringing the world to Christ belongs to every saint. The realization of that fact overturned paganism in the first few centuries after Christ. It is the only thing which can do it again. "It is an interesting, but not a surprising fact, that the circumstances of the first planting of Christianity in places which later were among its most powerful seats, including Rome and Carthage, are not known. Visitors to Jerusalem at the great festivals, mechanics who changed their abode from place to place, and commercial travellers, might carry to their homes the faith which they had elsewhere received and form the nucleus of Christian communities. The gospel doctrine was transported from place to place, as seeds are blown from the trees and wafted abroad" *(The Beginning of Christianity—* **Fisher***).*

The first truly literary assailant of Christianity was Celsus, who about the beginning of the second century taunted God's congregation with the fact that "woolworkers, cobblers, leather-dressers, the most illiterate and vulgar of mankind, were zealous preachers of the gospel."

One historian declares: "If men were often, in the first instance, won without the word, they were won to the word, and to Him who gave it. And the word was nigh unto them. It dropped from the lips of those whose lives adorned it, and it is a most notable circumstance that, though there was a regular ministry from the beginning, there is scarcely anything said in the history of the second and third centuries of Christians who could, in any distinctive sense, be called missionaries. The trader on his journey, the soldier in the camp, the slave in the house, the philosopher among his disciples, as well as the friend among friends and the mother among her children: these all did their part in diffusing the knowledge of the truth which they felt to be of God, and to which, they were assured, God would give the

victory" *(The Early Church,* **by David Duff, M.A., D.D., LL.D.)**

In the primitive church the saints met to worship and scattered to preach. The bench of the cobbler, the plowhandles of the farmer, the desk of the tax collector; these were the only pulpits known. The Christians took the good news to the world; they did not build houses and tell the world to come. The kingdom was spread like leaven works in the dough. Just as the yeast affects one particle of the mixture and it then permeates every other particle with which it comes in contact, so Christianity filled the hearts of men, and from them spread to other hearts as they came in contact in the pursuit of daily tasks. The slave girl whispered the story of freedom into the ear of her haughty mistress as she combed her tresses and applied the unguent; the bazaar keeper talked to the prospective purchasers as they examined his wares; the banker heard about the lowly Nazarene at the public bath; the clerk in his counting house; the farmer at the local inn. The Ethiopian treasurer learned of Christ as he rode along in his chariot; the jailer in his dungeon keep; Lydia out on the river bank. Everywhere men were persuaded by those who said, "We have found him of whom the prophets have spoken."

Those who were Christians did not speak of "entering the ministry." They were already in it. Everyone entered the ministry at baptism. To be in Christ was to be in the ministry. No one went away to study for "the Ministry." Each one began where he was and announced the Messiah who had come. People did not send for a preacher. They just began preaching. All who had been inducted into the kingdom could tell what they did and why they did it. Every Christian was a minister, everyone was a priest. The congregation was a priesthood— a royal priesthood composed of all believers.

Each week these priests gathered about a table. They ate of the bread and drank of the cup in memory of the Lord's death. As they were assembled they prayed. Their prayers were

spontaneous. They did not pray because they were "on the program" or because they were "assigned to do it." They talked to God as a son speaks with his father. They bore their mutual burdens to the throne to find grace to help in time of need. They rejoiced in thanksgiving in the presence of God. They spoke to each other to build up, stir up and cheer up. Their talks were not formal or stilted sermons. A number of brethren participated, speaking one by one, that all might be edified and all might be comforted.

The pattern of religious worship in the early church was designed by God to meet the needs of the church in all ages. It requires no alteration, needs no amendment, and demands no improvement. The church of today can only be healthy if it follows this prototype. To produce it we must first alter our views concerning the word "member." We employ it today to designate one who has united with a specific congregation, or who has his name on the roster of the local church. We talk about "a member of the church" in the same sense that we refer to a member of the country club, a lodge or a farm bureau. The word is never so employed in the New Testament. There it always refers to one who sustains a vital, living connection with the spiritual body of our Lord, and who is thus in direct relation to Him as the head. And just as one does not confer about the problem of finding something for his physical hands, ears or feet, to do, so we should not have to discuss putting the members of Christ to work.

When a child, is born, we never once question how many of his physical members will be, or should be, employed in the growth of his body. We train him in the use of his members as he grows toward maturity, but if someone were to advance the idea that a majority of the members should be bound and not permitted to function lest they embarrass the rest of the members, such a person would be laughed out of court. It is only in the spiritual body that we devise schemes whereby the majority of the members can shift their responsibility to one

hired to do the work. Such a system not only degrades God's spiritual institution, making of it a helpless, dependent and servile thing, but worst of all, it appropriates the privileges and abrogates the rights of those who are truly priests of God.

The call to a brighter and better day goes forth to all who are of a broken and contrite spirit. The way to liberty in Christ Jesus is the way of the cross. Men who plead for a complete restoration of the New Testament church must endure persecution and misrepresentation. An organization in its corruption never did, and never will, admit it. Its only feeling will be anger, not repentance. There is no hope of reforming a decadent movement as a body. The only hope is that men will arise who see the need to call forth those whose trust is stayed in God and once more start a move toward Jerusalem's broken down walls.

Our plea is to everyone who has a good and honest heart. Only on such fertile soil will the seed of the kingdom produce a bountiful yield. Regardless of religious affiliation in the past, of parental instruction, ecclesiastical tradition, or priestly doctrine, let us throw off the yoke which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear. Let us recapture the fountain of life so that its waters can once more flow *free* and *freely,* and restore to this earth the congregation as it was given by Him who is our great high priest at the right hand of God. Remember that "you also as living stones are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." May God bless the royal priesthood of all believers is our very humble and sincere prayer.

THE KINGDOM OF THE MESSIAH

by W. Carl Ketcherside

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THE KINGDOM OF THE MESSIAH

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by W. Carl Ketcherside

Foreword

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For a number of years it has been my wish to set forth my humble sentiments regarding the Kingdom of the Messiah. Other subjects of pressing importance have arisen to defer the work until the present, and now that I have written the book, I find that the research attendant upon its preparation has filled my heart with so many related matters, that I could write several more volumes and not incorporate all of the material. The reader will understand, then, that the subject under consideration has not been exhausted in its possibilities, but the suggestions made will, it is hoped, encourage other and better minds to present those ideas and interpretations which will enable us to "grow in grace and knowledge of the truth."

I have found my heart warmed repeatedly as I wrote, and the hours I have spent on the manuscript have been real "seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord." One of my purposes will be achieved, if in your reading of the book, there is aroused within you a greater sense of appreciation for the eternal purpose of God as manifested in His Son, and if you are made to feel the importance of the individual in the plan of the ages.

I am indebted to many sources for the impressions received, which have been woven into the warp and woof of this material, and memory cannot recall all of those to whom I have been brought under tribute. Students of the restoration movement will recognize that I have been greatly influenced by

the reasoning of Alexander Campbell and David King. The first of these reformers was born in Ireland, and did most of his teaching in our own land, to which he emigrated; the other carried the restoration banner in Great Britain. Both were profound thinkers, and I commend their writings to all eager searchers after truth. I have felt no servile obligation to them, nor to any other uninspired writer, but have sought to read objectively, and to form my convictions upon the basis of God's revelation, rather than what men have written about it.

One thing I would seek to impress upon the reader is that my presentation is not intended to be dogmatic or arbitrary. It does not contain the last word upon the themes considered. Especially in those parts of the book which deal with unfulfilled prophecy would I tread lightly and with becoming caution. If the great Jewish teachers so far misunderstood the prophecies of God as to be disappointed in Jesus of Nazareth when he first came, he may just as effectively disappoint the commentators with his second coming. However, since we do entertain certain definite views as to the future destiny of the kingdom, it would hardly be fair to the reader to refuse to state them. Rather, by having them published and exposed to criticism I may be able to ascertain any errors in my reasoning and make proper correction in my thinking.

The views advanced must certainly cut across those of many other sincere students of the sacred scriptures. So varied and divergent are the ideas of modern scholars, relative to our subject, that it would be impossible to write in such a manner as to avoid conflict. For that reason, I have sought to abstain from writing to refute opposition, and have rather tried to make the work a positive presentation. How well I have succeeded must be left to the reader to determine.

It will be observed that I have not limited my quotations of holy writ to any particular version of the Bible. I have used various translations, according as I felt that the purity of the

original was best served. Many of the quotations are from the *Revised Standard Version,* and these are used by special permission of the copyright owners, The National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

It is our hope that those who read will be sufficiently interested in the magnitude of the subject that, despite its humble portrayal, they will make the book available to their relatives and friends, sharing its contents with others, that more men and women will be motivated to live for the Messiah, and to acknowledge His sovereignty over their lives. If some weary soul is thus led to discover that peace which passeth all human reason, we will consider that our efforts have been sufficiently rewarded.

W. Carl Ketcherside

The Reign of God

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The kingdom of heaven! This is the theme which engrossed the prophets of old, and formed the basis of the revelation of our Lord and his holy apostles. The rule of God's anointed was the hope of the former, "and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days" (Acts 3:24). The inauguration of that reign constituted the foundation of the proclamation of the latter. As soon as our Lord had been immersed in the Jordan, and had grappled with the tempter in the wilderness, he launched into his mission. "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 4:17). When he sent forth his twelve envoys, he commissioned them as follows: "And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 10:7).

It is not too much to say that this challenging subject has occupied the attention of all the intelligent beings of the celestial and infernal realms in all ages, and should form the chief topic of meditation and consideration of all accountable beings who inhabit this terrestrial globe. Our heavenly Father is concerned in the matter as the source of all power or authority (Rom. 13:1), and the Son is equally concerned as the present King, "For he (God) hath put all things under his feet" and he must reign "until the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and authority and power" (1 Cor. 15:24, 27). The holy angels are

involved as they shall share with the Son in his glory, when he shall sit upon the throne of his glory (Matt. 25:31), and they are the reapers whom he will send forth to gather out of his kingdom all things that offend and them which do iniquity (Matt. 13:41).

In the apocalyptic vision, John was permitted to view a conflict in heaven, wherein Michael and his angels fought against Satan and his angels. When the latter forces were routed, and flung over the ramparts of heaven, the aged apostle, "heard a loud voice saying in heaven. Now is come salvation, and strength, *and the kingdom of our God,* **and the power of his Christ." It should be noted that the same voice expressed a woe for the inhabitants of earth, "for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time" (Rev. 12:7-12).**

How startling it is then to contemplate the indifference of mankind toward this momentous subject. When we are aware that the residents of heaven above and hell beneath are continuously motivated by it, how tragic it is to realize that those who are so vitally involved on earth, are oblivious to the import of a question which will spell out their final destiny. It is with a sincere desire to stimulate thought in the spiritual realm that we present the facts found in this book, and trace with you the kingdom of God as portrayed in the divine revelation.

Scope of the Term

Before we can apprehend the teaching of the Holy Spirit upon any subject we must first understand the meaning of the terms employed. The communication of the divine will in order to constitute a revelation to man was by necessity given in that medium of expression common to man, that is, in human language. In such language, words are used as symbols of ideas. But the same words are often used to express different concepts. Words have acquired and extended significations as well as

radical and limited meanings. We cannot assume that because the same expression, or a kindred one, is used, that the connotation is always identical.

The language of revelation must be submitted to the same laws of interpretation which govern the documents written by men in the same language, to the same persons, in the same age. It is essential that we observe the variety of bearings of any given term, and seek to determine from the context, either adjacent or remote, what is implied in any specific place. Leaving the special New Testament sense of the expressions "kingdom of God" and "kingdom of heaven" to demand our attention later, let us now note a few general facts about them.

The term "kingdom" has to do with government, or the exercise of control, power, dominion or restraint. As applied to God, it signifies a rule or reign manifested in a certain realm or domain by the Eternal One. But inasmuch as God governs in providential and moral aspects, as well as in an evangelical domain, the term "kingdom of God" has a varied content, dependent upon that phase of government under discussion at a given time or place. The radical idea of rule or government is always present, but the subjects and circumstances determine the nature and extent of that rule.

1. Universal

The writers of the old covenant scriptures recognized and affirmed the sovereignty of God over the entire universe, embracing both heaven and earth, and things animate and inanimate. The psalmist David expressed the idea thus: "The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all" (Psa. 103:19). In his public benediction, David said, "Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and

thou art exalted as head above all" (1 Chron. 29:11).

The thought is reiterated in Psalm 47:2, "For the Lord most high is terrible; he is a great king over all the earth." That the nations other than Israel were conceived to be under this moral jurisdiction is evidenced in verse 8: "God reigneth over the heathen: God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness." Again, "For the Lord is a great God, and a great king above all gods. In his hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is his also" (Psalm 95:3, 4).

It was upon this basis that the prophets asserted the supremacy of God over the various governments of the earth, and declared that he ruled in the kingdoms of men. When Daniel was summoned before Nebuchadnezzar to interpret the dream of the Babylonian king relating to the vision of the great tree which was chopped down until only the stump remained, the haughty monarch related the words he had heard, "This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men" (Dan. 4:17). The prophet confirmed the truth of the declaration by asserting that the dream was a revelation from God to the effect that the king would be humbled by dethronement and debasement for seven years until he learned "that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will" (verse 25, 32). At the end of his period of punishment, Nebuchadnezzar issued a decree of praise and honor to God, "whose domain is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom from generation to generation, and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" (verses 34, 35).

This further explains the statement of God in Proverbs

8:15, 16: "By me kings reign and princes decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth." As Daniel phrases it, "He changeth the times and seasons: he removeth kings and setteth up kings" (Dan. 2:21). We shall subsequently learn that the nation of Babylon was the first of four great universal monarchies with which God's elect came in special contact either through enslavement or otherwise, and it is significant that to the mighty ruler of the first of these, was given the great lesson of God's supreme sovereignty in the kingdoms of men.

God has not abdicated from this throne, nor has he been deposed by a superior force or greater intelligence, seeing that he is the fountain of both power and wisdom. The universe is his by right of creation. Of him who is the invisible God it is affirmed that all things were not only created by him, but for him, and they are maintained by him (Col. 1:16, 17). He made all things by the power of his word (John 1:3); he upholds all things by the word of his power (Heb. 1:3). He is not inactive in the rulership of the universe, for "the laws of nature" cannot uncrown him who decreed the laws. Laws without an enforcing or regulating agent are inconceivable. His government extends over every product of his creation and is both natural and moral, as it affects that which is material and immaterial, unaccountable and responsible.

Kingdom of God and Israel

God has not abdicated from this throne, nor The concept of an eternal and general rule of heaven, in the minds of the ancient seers, did not conflict with the view of a specialized and restricted reign, limited to a chosen nation. When God brought the former bondmen from Egypt to the foot of Sinai which was to be his awe-inspiring rostrum from which to announce their constitution, he proclaimed, "If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure to me

above all people: for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation" (Exo. 19:5, 6). While all of the earth belongs unto God and was therefore subject unto him, he now proposed to set up a special kingdom or nation, composed of those who occupied a distinctive *covenant relationship,* **which would exalt them to a position of special dignity above all other peoples.**

This was later called "the kingdom of the Lord in the hand of the sons of David" (2 Chron. 13:8) because "The Lord God of Israel gave the kingdom over Israel to David for ever, even to him and to his sons by a covenant of salt" (verse 5). It is interesting to note the terms describing the throne of Solomon, the son and successor of David. "And Solomon sitteth on the throne of the kingdom" (1 Kings 1:46). "Then sat Solomon upon the throne of David" (1 Kings 2:12). "I am risen up in the room of David my father, and sit on the throne of Israel" (1 Kings 8:20). "Upon the throne of the kingdom of God over Israel " (1 Chr. 28:5). "Then Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord as king" (1 Chr. 29:23).

It is evident that the kingdom of God over Israel is much more limited in extent than the sovereignty of the whole universe. However to the extent of limitation it is deepened in spiritual values and relationships. The maintenance of the relationship was contingent upon continued obedience to the terms of the covenant, which terms were accepted by the nation when initially promulgated (Exo. 24:7) and ratified by the blood sprinkled both upon the book and the people (Exo. 24:8).

That the people of Israel knowingly violated the terms of the covenant and wilfully broke it is amply attested by the holy scriptures. "They are turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers, which refused to hear my words; and they went after other gods to serve them: the house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken my covenant which I made with their fathers" (Jer. 11:10). "But they like men have transgressed the

covenant: there have they dealt treacherously against me" (Hosea 6:7). In view of this God declared that he would make a new covenant, not according to the former one which was broken (Jer. 31:31, 32).

Since the special kingdom of the Lord in Israel was conditioned upon the covenant, and since a new covenant was decreed, we may expect that the "kingdom of God" in a special sense will also be altered in nature and scope to conform to the character of the new covenant. Accordingly, we are not surprised to hear Daniel say, "In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms and it shall stand for ever" (Dan. 2:44).

Thus, when John the baptizer, came, he announced upon "his showing unto Israel" (Luke 1:80) that "The kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 3:2). It would be incompatible with God's purpose to have two diverse special kingdoms in existence simultaneously, so with the advertisement of the approach of the new reign, Jesus the Christ, informed the leaders of Israel, "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (Matt. 21:43). Thus we have introduced unto us a third usage of the term "kingdom of God" and this will form the basis of our study in the next chapter.

The Kingdom in the New Covenant

Contents

The prophets of God under the Mosaic economy freely predicted a coming state of affairs in which the Messiah would reign and which they designated as "the kingdom which God would set up." Micah affirmed that the mountain of the Lord's house would be established in the last days, and would be the goal of heathen nations, whose citizens would invite and encourage each other to go up to it for instruction in the law of God that they might walk in his ways. Peace would be effected when such nations submitted their disputes to God for arbitration, and accepted his chastisement, so that war as a means of international discipline would no longer be requisite. In peace and quiet each man would sit in the shade of his own vine and fig tree, without fear of molestation or disturbance of his domestic tranquillity. Those who had suffered affliction would no longer have to endure such an ordeal, but God having removed the trials would "reign over them in mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever" (Micah 4:1-7).

It was this kingdom of which John was a harbinger, specially sent from God (John 1:6). During his earthly sojourn Jesus also heralded its approach, and sent out at one time, twelve; and at another time, seventy, messengers, all of whom were commissioned to declare the same message. During the forty days of interval between his resurrection and ascension Jesus made his topic of conversation with his chosen envoys, the kingdom of God (Acts 1:3). It behooves us to study carefully the

connotation of a term so important as to be the subject of divine revelation and consideration.

The word "kingdom" is found 161 times in the common version of the new covenant scriptures, and is, without exception from *basileia.* **The expression "kingdom of God" occurs 72 times, while the expression "kingdom of heaven" occurs 32 times. The word** *basileia* **is defined as a "kingdom, realm, the region or country governed by a king; kingly power, authority, dominion, reign, royal dignity, the title and honor of a king."**

Even the casual student will instantly observe that the Greek term is much wider in scope than the English word "kingdom," for *basileia* **has at least three meanings. These may be expressed by realm, reign and rank. The first has to do with the territory or place over which the sovereignty extends, the second has to do with the duration or time of such sovereignty, and the last with the honor accruing to the regnant monarch.**

The term "kingdom" is too limited in significance to express all of these phases, and for that reason it is not a proper rendering in some places. When the nature of the statement or the context shows that it is the beginning of a period of sovereignty, or the duration of such an epoch that is being considered, "kingdom" is not an appropriate rendering, and may actually be incongruous. "Kingdom" has to do with the place, locality or province governed by a monarch, and does not express time or endurance. Upon such occasions the word "reign" is far superior to the other. In the new covenant scriptures, the allusion is much more frequently to the time, than to the place, yet the King James Version invariably translates by the word "kingdom" rather than "reign."

This version was given to the English speaking world in 1611 by James I, and has been hallowed by long generations of usage. Familiarity with its language, and reverence for its phraseology, will cause the pious reader to become insensible to

expressions which in other documents would be immediately discerned as inappropriate. We cite as examples the following passages. Jesus taught his disciples to pray "Thy kingdom come" (Matt. 6:10). He said to the critical Pharisees, "If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you" (Matt. 12:28). He declared that some who stood in his presence "would not die until they had seen the kingdom of God come with power" (Mark 9:1). It was said that a certain Arimathean "waited for the kingdom of God" (Mark 15:43).

In every one of these, the term "kingdom" is inappropriate. One may wait for a reign to commence but not for a place. He may come to a place, but it is surely conceded that a place cannot come unto him. We may properly pray for a rule or authority to come or start, but not for a territory or region to do so. The difference between reign and region can readily be seen. We can ascribe motion to the first as it comes, continues and is protracted, but not so with the second, for it is by nature stationary and immovable. Those who plead for "sound speech which cannot be condemned" should understand that John proclaimed, "Reform, for the reign of heaven is approaching." This is sensible and correct.

Summarizing the rule for correct interpretation of *basileia,* **it can be said quite simply, that when it indicates time it should be rendered "reign," but when the place is signified, it should be rendered "kingdom." In every case where the word is employed in conjunction with the word "preached" it should, without exception, be translated "reign." For example, "From that time Jesus began to proclaim, saying, Reform, for the Reign of Heaven approaches" (Matt. 4:17). "Then Jesus went over all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the glad tidings of the Reign" (Matt. 4:23). "As you go, proclaim, saying, The Reign of Heaven approaches" (Matt. 10:7). These are here given exactly as found in the translation from the original Greek by Dr. George Campbell of Glasgow, Dr. James Macknight of Edinburgh, and Philip Doddridge of England, and published**

with certain additions in the United States, by Alexander Campbell, generally under the title "Living Oracles." The words translated by our English word "preach" in their original usage by the Holy Spirit, meant something far different than the modern meaning attached to "preach." The idea of announcing or heralding was ever present in them.

When we speak today of "the Kingdom of Great Britain" or "the Kingdom of Norway" we visualize the territory or realm over which the Queen of England or the King of Norway has jurisdiction. Our employment of the word "kingdom" followed by a place name automatically leads us to associate the monarchy with the place or territory. This cannot be true, however, in the expression, "kingdom of heaven," for heaven is not the territory governed to the exclusion of other parts of the universe. Far from being so, the kingdom of heaven was proclaimed on earth to men, and they were told it was approaching them and would actually be among them on earth. It is obvious, then, that the expression "kingdom of heaven" would confuse and perplex the sincere student of the English language, for it is not used in the sense in which he is accustomed to use the word "kingdom." The words "rule" or "reign" as a translation of *basileia* under such circumstances, relieve us of the difficulty.

While it is a digression from our main theme, the fact that we have instigated a critical study of *basileia* in our attempt to fathom the meaning of the holy scriptures, makes it rather imperative that we point out that there are occasional uses of the word "kingdom" where neither "reign" or "kingdom" expresses the thought. Dr. George Campbell correctly cites two of these. One is in Luke 19:12, 15. This concerns the parable of the pounds, which is not to be confused with that of the talents. This one was voiced because of the proximity of Jesus to Jerusalem and due to the prevailing idea that the coming of the kingdom of God was imminent. The narrative concerns a certain nobleman who made a journey to a remote country to secure a kingdom,

and who returned after having obtained it.

This is clearly a reference to the political situation of the Jews at the time, when Judea was tributary to Rome, after having been subjugated by Pompey. In order to obtain certification of his right to govern, the local ruler had to journey to Rome and receive the authoritative approval of the reigning Caesar. This was the case with Archelaus, son of Herod the Great, who reigned in his father's stead, a fact which caused Joseph and Mary to turn aside into Nazareth upon their return from Egypt. The Jews sent a deputation of fifty men to Rome, who joined with eight thousand Jews then living in that city, in an appeal to Caesar at the temple of Apollo, that Archelaus not be allowed to reign over them. Caesar listened to the appeal and reduced Archelaus to the status of ethnarch. The term "kingdom" in verses 12 and 15 clearly refers to regal dignity or royal authority.

In Matthew 18:23 is introduced the parable of the unjust and unscrupulous debtor. The context shows that "kingdom" here relates to a mode or form of governing, or to a type of administration. It does not refer either to the realm or reign of a monarch, but to the method of dealing with those who are under his control.

The term "kingdom of heaven" is used more frequently by Matthew than any of the other writers of the New Testament, who seem to prefer "kingdom of God." Matthew uses both terms, and in such a manner as to show they are interchangeable. He records the words of Christ, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:20). In the very next chapter he has "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness" (Matt. 6:33). Moreover, in recording the same events, where Matthew uses "kingdom of heaven," the other writers have "kingdom of God." A case in point concerns John, the baptizer. Matthew has it, "He

that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he" (Matt. 11:11). Luke writes "He that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he" (Luke 7:28).

Moreover, the expression "kingdom of heaven" does not occur at all in Acts of Apostles, the epistolary writings, or in Revelation. It is apparent that there was something distinctive about the purpose of Matthew, or the ones to whom he wrote, which would make him use so frequently an expression which other writers do not employ. The answer can no doubt be found in the fact that while Mark wrote especially for the Romans, and Luke wrote to a Greek and for Greeks, Matthew's account was designed for the Jews. God always adapts his revelation to the needs and condition of those to whom it is addressed.

The Jewish world at that time was in a state of great expectancy. All were looking for a restoration of the kingdom to Israel, and the ushering in of a golden age by the Messiah of whom the prophets had spoken. Jerusalem, as the capital of the new regime, would be world famous. The Gentiles would become tributaries and would converge upon the Jewish commonwealth with gold and silver in abundance. Much of the thinking centered around a materialistic and earthly speculation. Matthew's account was addressed to the Jews to prove that the Nazarene was the Messiah. The term "kingdom of *heaven"* was employed to distract their minds from the idea of an earthly prince leading a victorious army. It was intended to point their minds upward and to recognize a higher source of origin and a different type of sovereignty. An appeal of a different nature was necessary to reach the non-Jewish hearers of that day.

A Fourth Use

God's revelation has been on a progressive basis as his divine purpose has been manifested on an ever ascending scale. Thus it is, that although we are said distinctly to be citizens of

the kingdom of God at present, there is held out to us the bright prospect of entrance into another phase of the kingdom more glorious than any we can experience here. Peter cites numerous requirements of the Christian vocation essential to making our calling and election sure, and declares, "So an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 1:11). At the judgment when the wicked are severed from the good, Jesus will say to the latter, "Come, ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. 25:34). Paul declares that those who walk after the flesh "shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

Summarizing our findings thus far, we have found the following implications of "the kingdom of God":

1. The kingdom universal and unlimited.

2. The kingdom before our Lord died for the sins of men.

3. The kingdom over which the Messiah now reigns.

4. The kingdom in a more glorious state in a dispensation to come.

It is essential to a correct understanding of the Bible that we keep in mind these four distinctive usages of the expression "kingdom of God." Those who do not properly distinguish them, often become guilty of perverting the scriptures to sustain a particular kingdom theory. They read a passage which speaks of the kingdom yet to come as an inheritance, and conclude that in no sense has the kingdom yet come. To sustain such an assumption they must twist or wrest those passages which refer to the kingdom in the past, or to the present rule of Christ. The true student has no recourse to such methods. He realizes that ancient Israel composed the kingdom of God, and that God took out of the way their law, priesthood and kingdom, and established another reign upon a more elevated plane, and that

there is yet another more glorious and eternal kingdom to come. And prior to all of these phases, everything was ruled by God, as it still is, in a great universal sway over all creation.

If we except the first in our numerical catalog above, it is possible that the last three are co-related and are a manifestation of the unity existing in God's plan of the ages. In the reign over Israel we have introduced unto us the terminology and language by which God proposed to describe our relationship in the present kingdom. No one can apprehend to its fullest the teaching of God with reference to the present reign of heaven if he ignores God's dealings with Israel. Hardly a phase or feature of our worship, service, sacrifice or religion was without its type or shadow in the prior dispensation. Neither can be fully understood without studying the other.

And just as the language, elements and relationships of ancient Israel served to depict those of God's children under the present regime, so do those of the present look forward and explain those of the future yet to be revealed in culmination of this age. And the final phase of the kingdom is related to the first, for as earthly Jerusalem was the holy city to which all came to worship and serve, so in the last, "the great city, the holy Jerusalem" lying foursquare, with its walls of jasper and its twelve gates of pearl, will be the dwelling place of the saints, and they shall bring the glory and honor of nations into it.

Because of the close relationship of the various aspects of the kingdom, it is not surprising that the inspired writers often speak of them in the same context. One who reads the parable of the tares will note that our Lord says it is a likeness of the kingdom of heaven. But the first part deals with the events in this age, while the harvest is distinctly said to be the end of the world, or the conclusion of this state. When the angels have gathered out all seducers and iniquitous persons "then shall the righteous shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Matt. 13:36-43).

The past condition and present status of the reign of heaven are both dealt with in the parable of the vineyard as related by our Lord in Matthew, chapter 21. The leaders of the Jewish nation are depicted as rebellious and murderous husbandmen, who despised and stoned the prophets and others sent by the owner to secure fruits. When he sent his son, expecting them to properly respect him, they reasoned that since he was the heir, they could kill him and keep possession of his inheritance. The parable concludes with the statement, "Know, therefore, that the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation who will produce the fruits of it." That there is a connection between the administration of God over the fleshly seed of Abraham and the kingdom embracing the spiritual seed of Abraham, there can be no question. Yet we must distinguish between them as we differentiate between a man and his shadow.

Our concern in this book is chiefly with the kingdom of God as now manifested, and with its fruition in the everlasting phase awaiting all of the faithful of all ages. We shall concern ourselves with the prophecies of that kingdom and then deal at length with its nature and with our relationship as citizens thereof. To such a voyage of discovery, with the foundation thus laid, we invite all of you to go along as our guests through succeeding pages.

Patriarchs and Judges

Contents

"Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning" **(Rom. 15:4).**

The word of God is not a compilation of unrelated passages. It contains a revelation of the divine will in a manner which was purposeful, profitable and progressive. Three dispensations of time are covered in the Bible. In each of these God ordained a system of religion adapted to the circumstances and conditions of those to whom the revelation was afforded. The three dispensations of the world's religious history, correspond to the three ages or stages of individual life, for as each person is first an infant, then a child, and finally a mature adult, so mankind had its infancy, childhood and maturity. And just as it is difficult to appreciate a man without a knowledge of his background and development, so one cannot ignore the plan of God in its unfolding process and perceive the fulness of truth relative to the kingdom of God.

Every nation began with a single family which then developed into a clan and finally into the nation as such. In the infancy of the world, God ordained a system of religion which was apposite to the state of man at the time. Having created man and his counterpart, God sanctified the marriage institution for the good of mankind and the multiplication of progeny to populate the earth. At the head of the organized unit thus formed was placed the man as husband and father, to rule over the little society formed by his union with another. With respect

to God, man as the governor of his own household, was also their prophet, priest and king.

In the first of these roles, he received the messages of heaven, either directly if occasion demanded, or later by word of mouth from his progenitors, and he conveyed them to his children, instructing them in the ways of righteousness, and warning them to continue therein. As a priest he officiated at the altar in behalf of his increasing congregation, offering in their behalf sin offerings, trespass offerings and thank offerings. Thus did Noah upon his exit from the ark of his salvation (Gen. 8:20); and so acted Abraham upon his entrance into Canaan (Gen. 12:7, 8). Job performed as a priestly officiant in behalf of his sons (Job 1:5) and at the direct instigation of God he interceded in behalf of his friends when they sacrificed at their own altars.

When men began to multiply upon earth, the tendency was to remain close to the family altar, and succeeding generations developed into tribal units over which the father, as a tribal chieftain, presided as king. Such tribes became small monarchies, although not of a constitutional nature. God was respected as the great ruler of the universe and the head of the clan was regarded as king by divine right and primacy, seeing that it was by heavenly fiat that the father was given the right to rule his own domain. The age is therefore called patriarchal, a combined form of the words for "father" and "chief."

Egypt early had her Pharaoh, a title apparently derived from "the sun," the hieroglyphic symbol of which was written over the name of the king. Many ancient monarchs associated their glory with that of the sun which was regarded as the ruler of the natural universe. When the Pharaoh of the time appropriated the wife of Abram for his harem at the suggestion of his princes, the Lord chastened him directly for his indiscretion (Gen. 12:14-17).

The kings of certain areas in primitive times occasionally

made forays into the territories of others and brought them into subjection. For twelve years the kings in the vale of Siddim were under the dominion of Chedorlaomer, king of Elam. When the five kings in Siddim Valley then rebelled, a combined army of four kings fought against them and overthrew them. One of the four was identified as a "king of nations" indicating that he was the chief of several confederated tribes. Due to their capture of Lot and the confiscation of his personal property, Abram led an attacking expedition of his own militia, consisting of more than three hundred trained servants whom he had raised from birth. After a successful combat in which he manifested a considerable degree of military strategy, Abram returned and was met in the king's dale by the king of Sodom. There came to meet him also the patriarch of the Jebusites, Melchizedek, who combined the functions of king of Salem and priest of the most high God (Genesis 14).

All of this demonstrates quite conclusively that long before the days of Abram, a petty sovereignty existed in every part of the populated earth. Such a development was a natural result of the primacy of the father as ordained by God, when descendants became sufficiently numerous as to justify a consolidated government. And while God made a special covenant with Abraham, which was established unto Isaac, he also promised that Ishmael would beget twelve princes, and be made a great nation (Gen. 17:20) although Ishmael was not in the covenant.

As a sovereign, Abraham commanded his children and his household after him (Gen. 18:19), negotiated peace pacts with neighboring kings and their chiefs of staff (Gen. 21:22-32), arranged for purchase of territory with guarantee of title, and insurance of the same for protection to posterity (Gen. 23), and disposed of personal property on the basis of his own will (Gen. 25:5, 6).

In ordaining the patriarchal system, the Lord arranged for a successor to the ruling father, to assure that in his absence or

death the divine service would not be neglected. The oldest son was given the responsibility of mediatorship in behalf of the remainder of the family. That this right of primogeniture was known even to the sons of Adam is evident in the words of the Lord to Cain, who was angry because his sacrifice was not recognized as valid, "Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted . . . And unto thee shall be his (Abel) desire, and thou shalt rule over him" (Gen. 4:6, 7). It was his despisal of this sacred obligation which caused Esau to be branded irreligious as well as immoral, when he bartered his birthright for a mess of pottage (Heb. 12:16). As a compensation for his increased accountability the oldest son was granted a double share of the patrimony upon the death of his father.

The first dispensation continued for twenty-five hundred years before it was replaced with the introduction of a system of national religion to the posterity of Abraham. During its long tenure the foundation was laid for succeeding dispensations. Even with the giving of the constitution to Israel at Sinai the only ones affected were the children of Israel, the remainder of the nations continuing under the provisions of the original arrangement. And since the family constituted the basis of the nation of Israel, the social worship under the guidance of the father was destined to continue in each family, although all of the tribes in the aggregate formed one large family bound together by consanguinity, and with each man wearing the distinctive mark of circumcision.

The theocracy continued in the Mosaic economy, although now the Lord was recognized as the peculiar king of his chosen heritage. The national constitution was first announced orally at Sinai and then written down for future reference. The people did not elect delegates, nor pass their own laws, but the statutes and judgments were delivered from heaven, the royal city. Although human agents were used to execute and enforce the constitutional law, it still remained that the Lord was supreme

director of national affairs.

In the wilderness sojourn, Moses and Aaron were the recognized custodians of the public welfare. No attempt to supplant them was tolerated, and those who conspired to do it were publicly charged with being "against Jehovah" (Num. 16:11). When Moses was apprised of his approaching death, he petitioned God to name his successor to lead the people after his decease, so they would not be as sheep without a shepherd (Num. 27:16, 17). He was instructed to see that Joshua was publicly acclaimed with a becoming ritual. "Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who prolonged their days after Joshua, and who knew all the work of the Lord which he did to Israel" (Josh. 24:31).

"And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died at the age of one hundred and ten years . . . and all that generation were also gathered to their fathers; and there arose another generation after them, who did not know the Lord or the work which he had done for Israel. And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the Lord and served the Baals; and they forsook the Lord, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt" (Judges 2:8-12).

"So the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he gave them over to plunderers, who plundered them; and he sold them into the power of their enemies round about, so they could no longer withstand their enemies . . . Then the Lord raised up judges, who saved them out of the power of those who plundered them. And yet they did not listen to their judges; for they played the harlot after other gods and bowed down to them" (Judges 2:14-17).

"Whenever the Lord raised up judges for them, the Lord was with the judge, and he saved them from the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge; for the Lord was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who afflicted and oppressed

them. But whenever the judge died, they turned back and behaved worse than their fathers . . . they did not drop any of their practices or their stubborn ways" (Judges 2:18, 19).

The period of the judges is one of the most interesting, yet one of the most difficult to comprehend of all the eras in the checkered career of Israel as a nation. The problem is made more acute due to the sparsity of material in the inspired record, which introduces them in rapid succession, paints a picture of their exploits and ushers them off the stage before the observer has had a chance to study them. It is often possible to grasp significant facts about an office or function among God's people by comparison or contrast with a similar office in contemporary nations, but in this we are at a total loss. Other nations had their elders, kings, captains of the host, secretaries, priests and tribal heads, as did Israel, but the latter stands alone in ancient history as far as the judges are concerned.

These *shophetim,* **as the original Hebrew would have it, from the meaning of the term, were "rulers of the people." Perhaps the people generally had a voice in their selection. This was true in the case of Jephthah, the outcast son of a harlot, who collected about him a group of worthless fellows as marauders and raiders. When the Ammonites declared war on Israel, the elders of Gilead went to the hide-out of Jephthah with the invitation, "Come and be our leader." Jephthah naturally pointed out that in his distress they had driven him from his father's house, and asked, "Why have you come to me when you are in trouble?" Upon receiving assurance of their recognition of his ability, Jephthah said, "If you bring me home again to fight with the Ammonites, and the Lord gives them over to me, I will be your head." To this stipulation the elders agreed with Jephthah, who then accompanied them, "and the people made him head and leader over them" (Judges 11:1-11).**

It should be noted that the judges recognized themselves as being mere instruments of God, and even Jephthah the raider,

acknowledged the power of victory belonged to the Lord. It is interesting to recall that "Jephthah spoke all his words before the Lord at Mizpah," which simply means that at this holy place God was called upon to witness the agreement made with the elders and to ratify it. Thus the theocratic government was not disturbed by the arrangement for these special rulers under divine sanction. This fact is emphatically emphasized in the case of Gideon. After his notable victory over the kings of Midian, the men of Israel attempted to set up a dynasty, with the words, "Rule over us, you and your son and your grandson also." But Gideon said to them, "I will not rule over you, and my son will not rule over you; the Lord will rule over you" (Judges 8:22, 23). This is enhanced by the New Testament reminder of Gideon, Barak, Samson and Jephthah, "who through faith conquered kingdoms and enforced justice" (Heb. 11:32, 33).

At this juncture of our study of the unfolding of God's plan it will be wise for us to pause for orientation of our thinking. During the patriarchal dispensation, the realm of mankind was under a theocracy (rule of God). This was effective as a restraining influence only so long as the growing nations recognized and worshipped the one true and living God. However, the worship of a plurality of gods, imaginary, natural, and artificial, became almost universal. At the time when all the nations had selected their gods, the God of heaven selected a nation, for the specific purpose of keeping alive the monotheistic concept on earth, that he might achieve his purpose in the salvation of men.

Calling an individual out from the idolatrous practices to which his father was already addicted, the Lord promised to make of him a great nation. When a sufficient posterity had accumulated under bondage in Egypt, they were led forth with no military might being manifested, and were confirmed as a constitutional theocracy before being given the territory which had long since been designated as their own.

The provisions of the constitution at Sinai were wisely designed to strengthen the theocracy. All males were required to appear before the Lord thrice annually (Exo. 23:17). After six years of cultivation the land was to lie fallow for one year during which the people all assembled at Jerusalem before the Lord at which time the entire law was read in their hearing. Twice each day a sacrifice was to be offered at the place where God said he would meet and speak to them. He further declared, "I will dwell among the people of Israel, and will be their God. And they shall know that I am the Lord their God" (Exo. 29:42-45).

If a slave wanted to remain with his master, the master had to "bring him to God" and bore his ear through with an awl (Exo. 21:6). If it was alleged that something left in trust was stolen, the owner of the house was required to "come near to God" and exonerate himself from implication (Exo. 22:8). In event of any breach of trust both parties had to "come before God" and the one whom God condemned had to pay double indemnity (Exo. 22:9). In any case requiring expert decision in matters of homicide, civil rights, or aggravated assault, the parties had to repair to the place chosen by God, and submit the case to the Levitical priests, and to the judge who was currently in office, and when a decision was rendered it had to be accepted without recourse to further appeal, upon penalty of death (Cp. Deut. 17:8-12). All of this was calculated to augment the theocratic government in the eyes of the people.

Unfortunately, however, because of the indifference, unconcern, and stubborn attitude of the people, the government was not carried out to its furthest extent as intended. After the decease of Joshua there was a relapse into tribal divisions with each tribe on its own, and with no real adherence to the rules relative to a strong central government. There was no enforcing agency for the laws, and no punitive power for violation of them. Israel could not seem to grasp the concept of a King who was omniscient, omnipotent and eternal. They did not appeal their cases unto him for his divine judgment. Since they had no strong

central officer and did not recognize the majesty of God's kingship, conditions became chaotic, as indicated by the closing verses of Judges: "In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25).

Certainly the provision for judges was better adapted to the maintenance of the theocratic system than any other. The judges were recognized as direct agents to enforce obedience to the Great King. They held office by divine appointment, receiving their commission either directly or by heavenly sanction, and thus were more dependent upon God than a monarch would be. They did not have a dynastic approach to government, nor seek to perpetuate themselves and their posterity in control, by force or political maneuvering. Their graver decisions were made with the cooperation of God through revelation, by means of the Urim and Thummim (Num. 27:21), and thus the authority of heaven was always recognized. They disclaimed royal privileges and prerogatives and constantly called Israel back to a trust in God and his word.

Nothing is more apparent than the fact that after settlement in Canaan, motivated by a fierce sense of tribal jealousy, Israel was separated into various segregated units. In time of national emergency the first thought would be for a central figure of strong personal influence, exalted as king to lead the people in war and to secure victory. To this system they would naturally gravitate through example of other nations about them, and by fear for their own survival. But it is easier to select a king than to dismiss one. And kings may continue a state of terror and emergency to perpetuate themselves in power.

Nations felt called upon through a sense of patriotic pride to maintain royalty in such splendor as to excel others about them. The sons of a king are often profligate by reason of their rearing in a state of pampered luxury. The permanency of a kingdom breeds arrogance and dictatorial supremacy. But the judges were raised up for a special need and were temporary in

their functions. Perhaps it was this relation of the special deliverers and rulers to the theocracy which makes them without counterpart in other contemporary nations. If so, it is to be regretted that the system was ever displaced by a kingly rule.

Theocracy and Monarchy

Contents

The earnest student of the Bible is made constantly aware of the manner in which the Lord turns the perverseness and iniquity of men into instruments for accomplishment of his purpose. Thus the brothers of Joseph moved by envy and jealousy sold him into bondage, only to have him later tell them, "As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good" (Gen. 50:20). The psalmist declared, "Surely the wrath of men shall praise thee" (Psalm 76:10). A good instance of this is found in the clamor of Israel for their first king.

When Moses rehearsed the law, he anticipated that Israel would some day cry out for a monarch. They had lived for generations in Egypt under a king, and it would be natural for them to ascribe to the king, all of the wealth, power and prestige of this advanced and enlightened nation. Too, when there is danger of attack from a foreign power, men tend to turn to a strong leader, and it is a common thing for a military hero to be given prominence when victory is won. As a safeguard for the theocratic government in such an eventuality, Moses laid down certain stipulations governing the election of a sovereign ruler. These may be found in Deuteronomy 17:14-20 and are as follows:

1. No one must be chosen as king who was not a native born Israelite. A foreigner could never be designated as king and this was a very wise arrangement, for Israel was to be segregated from other peoples to prevent amalgamation and loss of national

identity. One who was an alien might not appreciate God's purposes in this regard, and a foreigner might think more of his native land and its customs and habits than of the preservation of the ideals of the elect nation.

2. They could set as a king over them only one "whom the Lord your God will choose." This would tend to eliminate rivalry, political maneuvering and the installation of those who would exploit the people for personal gain. The first king was chosen by lot at Mizpah when Samuel assembled all Israel for the public selection, but the acceptance was not unanimous at first, some worthless fellows deprecating Saul's ability (Cp. 1 Sam. 10:17-27). In the case of David, the Lord ratified his choice by saying, "Arise, anoint him, for this is he" (1 Sam. 16:12). With the introduction of this family into royalty God made the throne hereditary, that the Messiah might establish his right to David's throne.

3. The king was instructed that "he must not multiply horses for himself, or cause the people to return to Egypt in order to multiply horses, since the Lord has said to you, 'You shall never return that way again.'" The purpose of this prohibition was dual in nature. It should be remembered that the ancients did not use the horse as a beast of burden. The ox and the ass were used for menial service. The horse was used exclusively for warfare and became a prophetic symbol of war, either literal or spiritual. Israel was permitted by divine constitution to maintain a standing army for resistance of aggression, but as the land was subdued by infantry it was to be so protected and defended. Ancient nations with highly organized cavalry units became aggressors and sought the lands of others, but God wanted his people to be satisfied within their own boundaries, where he promised them "milk and honey" to sustain them.

Another reason for this restraint was found in the fact that Egypt was the great horse mart of the world, and the Lord did

not want his people to engage in traffic with the Egyptians, lest by their interchange of trade pacts, exports and imports, and general bartering back and forth, the people of Israel be persuaded to return to this land of their former degradation, and adopt the idols thereof as they did in the case of the golden calf of Aaron's construction, undoubtedly a reproduction of the Egyptian bull god Apis, with which they were so familiar.

4. The king was further forbidden to "multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away." Most of the oriental monarchs maintained harems for gratification of carnal lust. The tendency to strengthen political position by marrying foreign women of royal extraction is well known to every student of history, both sacred and profane. Such women brought with them their foreign deities, and often seduced the king to worship such, using all of the wiles of feminine flattery and appeal.

5. Again the king was not to "greatly multiply for himself silver and gold." The accumulation of wealth leads to avarice and luxury, which in turn breeds sensuality and licentiousness. The people become impoverished through the heavy burden of taxation, pampered princes are rendered incapable of ruling justly, and decadence of morals obtains at a time when the gold and silver are piled highest in the realm.

"Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey;

Where wealth accumulates and men decay."

It was further required that upon accession to the throne, the king had to personally copy down in a book the complete law, securing for this purpose the original which was kept in trust by the Levitical priests. This copy he had to keep with him and "read in it all the days of his life," thus constantly refreshing his memory relative to the statutes and commandments of God. This is an important factor for it is proof that the theocracy was not discontinued from the accession of an earthly monarchy, but the kings were to be recognized as mere envoys of the Lord.

They could not enact laws, nor could they repeal or revoke old ones. All legislative power remained with God, and the king was not absolute in authority, but merely an executive to enforce the laws of the Lord.

7. The solemn charge was given to the king that he was not to be proud or arrogant, and his heart was not to be lifted up above his brethren. With this judicious restriction upon him, the king would recognize himself as a special servant of the brotherhood rather than a despot over slaves. Conscious ever of his own shortcomings and of the standing and position of his friends, he would not assume cruel and dictatorial attitudes. It is worthy of remark that when the first king was anointed, "Samuel told the people the rights and duties of the kingship, and he wrote them in a book and laid it up before the Lord" (1 Sam. 10:25).

The First King

The eventuality for which Moses prepared the people finally came to pass. Samuel, the first national prophet, in his old age, anointed his sons Joel and Abijah with him as judges and administrators, with headquarters in Beer-sheba. These sons were unlike their father in character, and being greedy for gain, they accepted bribes and perverted justice. Their malfeasance in office gave Israel an occasion to petition for a king. Their real reason seems to have been a national pride which demanded a king to be like the nations around them.

Samuel was greatly perturbed when all of the elders of Israel presented their demand at Ramah, but God told him to grant their request for it was he whom Israel had really rejected from being king over them. After the prophet had predicted that the choosing of a king would result in a forced military draft, excessive taxation and virtual enslavement of the populace, all of them even more vociferously demanded such a monarch.

Accordingly, a Benjamite named Saul, the son of Kish, was notified at the conclusion of a private feast that he would become king. Shortly afterwards, in a great conclave at Mizpah, he was designated by divine lot, and Samuel said, "Do you see him whom the Lord hath chosen?"

Although a few dissented and despised Saul, he soon became a national hero as the result of a victory over Nahash, an Ammonite king, but refused to exercise vengeance upon those who had previously derided him. At this time Saul gave credit to the Lord, declaring that he had wrought deliverance in Israel. After this victory, Samuel summoned all of the people to Gilgal where he publicly and solemnly anointed Saul, and took advantage of the occasion to recount the deeds of God, justify his own conduct in office, and demand that even the slightest deviation from the path of rectitude as a judge be pointed out. When the multitude acknowledged the purity of his administration he censured them severely for demanding a king, but said, "If you will fear the Lord and serve him and hearken to his voice and not rebel against the commandment of the Lord, and if both you and the king who reigns over you will follow the Lord your God, it will be well; but if you will not hearken to the voice of the Lord, but rebel against the commandment of the Lord, then the hand of the Lord will be against you and your king" (1 Sam. 12). The abdication of Samuel and the transfer of duties to the new regime officially ended the period of the judges, although Samuel continued in the office of national prophet.

Mistakes of Saul

Saul had been fully informed of the nature of his rule, and it was impressed upon him by Samuel that he was merely a viceregent of the Lord. Under no circumstances was the king to be permitted to make laws, or to alter, amend and suspend them. He was to receive the word of God upon every occasion through the mouth of the prophet and act in accordance with the divine

communication. But at the first real test, Saul failed. His son Jonathan, who was a lieutenant with a thousand men under his command, captured a Philistine fortress, whereupon Saul summoned the people to Gilgal for a general attack. But when the Philistines put a large force of both infantry and cavalry in the field, the Israelites crept like cravens into caves, cisterns and tombs, and scattered from Saul. The king had been told by Samuel to wait for him seven days at Gilgal, but on the seventh day when Samuel had not appeared, Saul became frantic and intruded upon the office of the priests by personally offering sacrifices. No sooner had he done so than Samuel appeared.

Saul demonstrated by his own language that he had acted in full knowledge of his sin, and Samuel said, "You have done foolishly; you have not kept the commandment of the Lord your God which he commanded you; for now the Lord would have established your kingdom for ever. But now your kingdom shall not continue; the Lord has sought out a man after his own heart; and the Lord has appointed him to be a prince over the people, because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you" (1 Sam. 13:13, 14).

It is apparent that Saul either never fully grasped his relationship to the theocratic government, or was so self-willed and obdurate as to render it impossible for him to properly function in such an arrangement. Motivated by political aspirations, influenced by fear of the people, and nervously upset by any temporary hitch in his plan, he acted impulsively and impetuously.

The character of Saul was forcibly manifested in another test of his willingness to conform to God's arrangement. He was given a direct order from the Lord to completely destroy the Amalekites, and to eradicate both man and beast among them. However, Saul and the people retained the choicest sheep and oxen and also spared the life of Agag, the king. When Samuel came to him at the instigation of the Lord, he asked him, "Why

did you not obey the voice of the Lord? Why did you swoop on the spoil, and do what was evil in the sight of the Lord?" (1 Sam. 15:19). After an ineffectual attempt to argue the case, Saul said, "I have sinned; for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice."

The final demonstration of headstrong disregard of divine commands, caused the Lord to repent that he had made Saul king (1 Sam. 15:11). Samuel said to the cringing and disobedient monarch, "The Lord has torn the kingdom from you this day, and has given it to a neighbor of yours, who is better than you." After this Samuel did not see Saul again until the day of his death, but he continued to grieve over Saul.

With the end of this initial dynasty approaching we should recapitulate and refresh our minds concerning the rule of God over Israel.

1. The termination of the judges and the introduction of the kingship did not affect the theocratic principle. The chief difference seems to have been that while the former received their instruction by consultation with the Urim and Thummim, the latter were apprised of the will of God by prophets.

2. The regnancy of Benjamin, the smallest tribe, through the family of Saul, could have been established over Israel during the whole Mosaic Dispensation (1 Sam. 13:13).

3. The forfeiture of this right through the stubbornness of Saul, provided an opportunity for the Lord to achieve his will in establishing the tribe of Judah in the kingship; just as the wilfulness of the whole nation in demanding a king, made possible the introduction of the system which was a prelude to the reign of the Messiah, which was to grow out of the theocracy.

4. The successor to Saul, David, was a man after God's own heart, and better than Saul, because of his proper concept

of relationship in the kingdom. As an individual, David had many private shortcomings, but in his official standing in relationship to the rule of God, he was faultless. Although guilty of great and grievous personal crimes, he was without flaw in his official concept of the theocracy.

5. David demonstrated this even prior to his coronation. Saul constantly sought to kill him and "was David's enemy continually" (1 Sam. 18:29). Once, when David and his men were sitting in a cave, Saul entered alone to attend to the demands of nature, and David's men urged him to slay his enemy. Instead David cut off the skirt of Saul's robe, and then was filled with remorse, saying, "The Lord forbid that I should do this thing to my ruler, the Lord's anointed, to put forth my hand against him, seeing he is the Lord's anointed" (1 Sam. 24:6).

6. It was David's constant recognition as given in his own words, "The Lord is king for ever and ever" (Psalm 10:16) that enabled the Lord to say to him that his son should succeed him, "But I will not take my steadfast love from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever" (2 Sam. 7:15, 16).

We are thus ready to begin our investigation of the accession of Judah to the kingship, and of the throne of David, upon which the Messiah was to sit. And we cannot but recall the words of the aged Israel as he summoned his sons to his dying bedside. "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples" (Gen. 49:10). That this is a prediction of the reign of the Messiah to come, both Jews and Christians have generally agreed. The Jewish Targums paraphrase it: "Until the time when the King Messiah comes to whom it belongeth." The following observations are in order.

1. With the investiture of the regal rights upon Judah there would be a guarantee that regardless of what defections might arise, there would be no absolute termination of the kingly prerogatives in the eyes of the descendants of Israel until the advent of the Messiah.

2. This would demand that regardless of the amalgamation and disruption of other tribes, the tribal identity of Judah would be maintained until the coming of the Messiah.

3. The destruction of tribal identity in such a manner as to render it impossible to trace the lineage or descent therefrom, would be positive proof that the Messiah had already come. No Jew upon earth today can designate or point out the tribe of Judah. Herein is found one of the greatest proofs that the Messiah has come.

4. The relationship of the rule of God over the fleshly descendants of Abraham to that of the Son of God over the spiritual descendants of Abraham is clearly shown. The sceptre was granted to Judah on a temporal basis only until he comes to whom it belongs.

5. No one can understand the rule of God's anointed by ignoring the rule of God under the prior dispensation. The roots of "the kingdom of God" reach far back into the past. It is with becoming reverence that we prosecute our research further into the divine purpose as revealed.

The Throne of David

Contents

It is not our purpose in this volume to investigate the private life or public affairs of David, the son of Jesse, except as his career is entwined with the subject of the kingdom of God. Upon the death of Saul, the captain of his army, Abner, conspired to have Ish-bosheth, Saul's son, inaugurated as king over the major part of Israel. Judah recognized David as king, and he reigned in Hebron more than seven years, during which time a war was carried on between his forces and those of Ish-bosheth, until the latter was assassinated while taking a mid-day siesta in his own home. Upon the death of Ish-bosheth David was made king over all Israel, and reigned thus for thirty-three years more.

David became conscience-stricken over the fact that he resided in a new house of cedar while the ark of the covenant was yet housed in a tent when in its sacred repository. So he announced his intention of erecting a suitable temple for the service of God, but was restrained from doing so by Nathan the prophet, who nevertheless gave him great comfort and assurance, by conveying the promise of God in these words, "When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your son after you, who shall come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will be his father, and he shall be my son . . . And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever" (2

Sam. 7:12-16).

1. This is a good example of a prediction with a two-fold meaning. It is possible for him who knows all things from the beginning to use a contiguous event to shadow a remote one, and so to phrase his message that the language can apply to either.

2. The immediate revelation concerned Solomon, whose rule was to be assured after the death of David, and the house he would build for the Lord was the temple in Jerusalem.

3. The establishment of the house and kingdom of David was a guarantee that there would be no superseding of the dynasty by another, as in the case of Saul.

4. That there is a deeper meaning to be derived from the prophecy, and that it relates to the reign of the Messiah is definitely shown by the Holy Spirit, so that it is not reckless assumption to state that the Lord, through Nathan, was giving a pre-view of his kingdom purpose.

5. The apostle Peter, upon the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus, applies the prophecy directly to him. "I may say to you confidently of the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants upon his throne, he foresaw and spoke of the resurrection of Christ" (Acts 2:29-31).

6. Upon the basis of the statement to David, the angel Gabriel, in the annunciation of the birth of Jesus, declared, "The Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there will be no end" (Luke 1:32, 33).

7. That the prophecy reaches far beyond Solomon is affirmed by the writer of Hebrews, who definitely quotes "I will

be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son" (Heb. 1:5) as directly applicable to Jesus, as the Son of God.

A summary of the points set forth in this great prefiguration will show the following:

1. The Messiah was to be in the lineage, and a direct descendant of David.

2. The Messiah was to be raised up while David was still in his sepulcher. Thus the resurrection and exaltation of the Messiah was to be a special event prior to the general resurrection in which David would participate.

3. The kingdom of the Messiah was to be established on the throne of David, that is, it would be conditioned upon his succession as a member of the tribe of Judah and his relationship as an heir of David.

4. The Messiah would build a house for God in which God would dwell through the Spirit, even as he formerly dwelt in the tabernacle and temple through the Shekinah.

5. The kingdom of the Messiah was destined to continue for ever.

6. The Lord said to David, "He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever." But he added, "Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure before me." Thus the kingdom of the Messiah was to be directly related to that of David. Inasmuch as David was the first of Judah to wield the scepter, and he thus sat as the regal representative of the theocracy upon earth, it remains that this theocracy, as a rule of God, was to be transferred at some future date, while the body of David was in the tomb, to a descendant of his after the flesh, who would also be a Son of God. "I will be to him a father and he shall be to me a son." The theocracy vested in Judah would never be wholly supplanted "until he comes

whose right it is."

The promise and purpose of God remained inviolate amidst the vicissitudes affecting the kingdom. The promise was repeated to Solomon, conditioned upon his fidelity (1 Kings 6:12), but when he became an idolater, the Lord told him, "I will surely tear the kingdom from you . . . However I will not tear away all the kingdom, but I will give one tribe to your son, for the sake of David my servant, and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen" (1 Kings 11:11-13). This one tribe was to be given "that David my servant may always have a lamp before me in Jerusalem" (1 Kings 11:36). Even when succeeding kings became increasingly wicked, "the Lord would not destroy Judah, for the sake of David his servant, since he promised to give a lamp to him and to his sons for ever" (2 Kings 8:19).

Testimony of the Prophets

In the darkest days which the nation experienced, the prophets spoke of a brighter era to come, when God would raise up one as a witness, leader and commander for the peoples, and when he would make an everlasting covenant, which he designated "my steadfast, sure love for David" (Isa. 55:3, 4). Jeremiah predicted that the days were coming when a righteous Branch would be raised up for David. He was to reign as king, deal wisely, and execute judgment and justice. His regime was to be one of salvation and security. His name was to be called "The Lord our righteousness" (Jer. 23:5; 33:15). That this is a direct allusion to Jesus as the Messiah is proven by the two designations, "the Branch" and "the Lord." It was because of this that Jesus dwelt in Nazareth "that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled. 'He shall be called a Nazarene'" (Matt. 2:23). The Hebrew word for Nazareth was *Netzer,* "a branch."

Ezekiel refers to the Messiah as David, and in his prophecy

concerning the future welfare of Israel, declares, "I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the Lord, will be their God, and my servant David will be prince among them" (Ezek. 34:23, 24).

Again he quotes the word of the Lord, "My servant David shall be king over them; and they shall have one shepherd." God was to make a covenant of peace which was to be everlasting. He was to set his sanctuary in their midst for evermore, his dwelling place would be with them, he was to be their God, and they were to be his people (Ezek. 37:24-28). Surely this is a picture of Jesus and the church of God.

No consideration of the relationship of the Messiah to David and his kingdom would be complete without reference to Isaiah, chapter 9. The prophecy of this chapter in its primary sense is related to the circumstances existing at the time of its pronouncement, and begins with chapter 7. At the time, Ahaz was king of Judah, and Rezin and Pekah were the kings of Syria and Israel to the north. Tiglath-Pileser was king of the Assyrian nation and was bent on subjugating all of western Asia. To resist his advance, Rezin and Pekah formed a coalition, and conspired to overthrow the dynasty of David and install the son of Tabeal as king in Judah, so they could have a man more favorable to their purposes.

At this time, Isaiah was instructed to meet Ahaz at the conduit of the upper field on the highway to Fuller's Field, and encourage him to have no fear of the conspiracy. When Ahaz was requested to ask a sign from God, but refused, the prophet said a sign would be given anyway. A young woman would conceive and bear a son, and before the child reached the age of accountability, the land whose two kings were dreaded would be divested of any power to threaten. The immediate fulfillment was in the birth of Isaiah's own son, Maher-shalal-hash-baz, about whose birth, Isaiah was told to take a large tablet and

write the facts, then seal up the testimony of his writing as a witness. When in dire distress, others would consult wizards and fortune-tellers, the faithful were to consult this teaching and testimony.

The introduction of chapter 9 portrays the fact that the land of Zebulun and Naphtali which lay far toward the north, adjacent to Syria, would be first overrun by Tiglath-Pileser, but in a brighter day would be restored. In a larger and spiritual sense this was applied to the personal ministry of our Lord in Galilee. "Leaving Nazareth he went and dwelt in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

"The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,

toward the sea, across the Jordan,

Galilee of the Gentiles—

the people who sat in darkness

have seen a great light,

and to those who sat in the region and shadow of death

light has dawned" (Matt. 4:13-16).

To assure Ahaz of the permanency of the rule of David, and thus to offset the fear of the conspirators to unseat him in favor of the son of Tabeal, a remarkable prophecy is provided:

"For to us a child is born, to us a child is given;

and the government will be upon his shoulders,

and his name will be called Wonderful Counselor,

Mighty God;

Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of his government and of peace

there will be no end,

upon the throne of David, and over his kingdom,

to establish it and uphold it

with justice and with righteousness

from this time forth and for evermore" (Isa. 9:6, 7).

Thus the reign of the Messiah in a golden future age is depicted, when justice and righteousness shall govern for ever, when the expansion of benign rule and the growth of peace will be boundless, through the ministration of him who sits upon the throne of David.

"When the oppressor is no more,

and the destruction has ceased,

and he who tramples under foot

has vanished from the land,

then a throne will be established in steadfast love

and on it will sit in faithfulness

in the tent of David

one who judges and seeks justice

and is swift to do righteousness" (Isa. 16:4, 5).

Despite the years of exile, spiritual destitution, and

subservience to foreign powers, the hope was held aloft that regardless of the low estate into which the kingdom fell, there would be a glorious revival, and the dawning of a better and brighter day of peace, reclamation and restitution.

"In that day I will raise up

the booth of David that is fallen

and repair the breaches,

and raise up its ruins,

and rebuild it as in the days of old" (Amos 9:11).

Because of the prophecy related to this "that the rest of men may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who are called by my name," the apostle James, at Jerusalem, directly applied this to the church and successfully squelched the attempt to bind circumcision upon Gentile converts to the Christ (Acts 15:16-18). The tent of David which sagged through neglect and indifference, which was breached by idolatry and ruined by sin, has been rebuilt upon a far better scale, by the one who is "a minister in the true tent which is set up not by man but by the Lord" (Heb. 8:2).

It is no wonder, in view of all that we have thus learned, that the Messiah personally refers to himself as "the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David" (Rev. 3:7). The word "key" in prophetic symbolism signifies "authority," especially in granting or barring entrance, that is, in opening and closing. At some juncture between the time when the Lord promised David a son to sit upon his throne and the time when the apocalyptic vision revealed the Son of God with the keys, the kingdom of the Messiah became a reality, and the authority was transferred unto him "whose right it is." He is the "Lion of the tribe of Judah," and "the root and offspring of David" (Rev. 5:5; 22:16).

Testimony of David

The psalms of David bear personal witness to David's own faith in the Messiah. David is distinctly said to be a prophet (Acts 2:30), and it is affirmed that he was inspired by the Holy Spirit (Mark 12:36) and that the Holy Spirit spoke by his mouth (Acts 1:16; 4:25). To those who challenge the position that certain psalms are Messianic in content, we merely cite Luke 24:44 where Jesus declares that "everything written about me in . . . the psalms must be fulfilled."

One of the most interesting of the psalms of this nature is the second. In verses 1 and 2, kings, princes, Gentiles and the people, are pictured in conspiracy and tumultuous assembly for the specific purpose of thwarting the design of God and His Messiah. In verse 3 this motley horde of insurrectionists exclaim, "Let us burst their bonds asunder, and cast their cords from us." It is as if the nations resented the restraints imposed by God, and realized that the ascension of the Son to the throne would install him as a judge over the nations. To forestall this they attempt to prevent the coronation.

In verses 4-6, Jehovah is pictured as laughing in derision at the vain attempt of men to mock him and overthrow his eternal decrees. He then speaks out of his wrath, and terrifies them with his fury, "I have set my king in Zion, my holy hill." That the transactions here referred to are applicable to the plan of God relative to the Messiah is plainly demonstrated in the words of the Jerusalem congregation assembled for prayer. After quoting the first two verses of the psalm, they say, "For truly in this city there were gathered together against thy holy servant Jesus, whom thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, to do whatever thy hand and thy plan had predestined to take place" (Acts 4:27, 28).

In verses 7-9 of the psalm, the Messiah personally speaks, reciting the decree of the Lord, as spoken unto him. "You are

my son, today have I begotten you. Ask of me and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." The language of verse 7 is quoted in Hebrews 1:5 as evidence of the superiority of Jesus to angels; and in Hebrews 5:5 as proof of his divine appointment to the priesthood of Melchizedek. The student should observe that "the day" in which he was begotten was not the date of his advent into the world, but of his resurrection from the dead. Paul declared in the Antiochan synagogue, "We bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus; as also it is written in the second psalm, 'Thou art my Son, today have I begotten thee'" (Acts 13:32, 33).

The fact of the rule of iron, symbolizing firmness is attested to in Rev. 19:15, where a vision of Christ as "the Word of God" declares, "From his mouth issues a sharp sword with which to smite the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron; he will tread the winepress of the fury and the wrath of God the Almighty."

In view of this positive teaching that the Messiah was to be both the Son of God and His king, on what grounds do the Jews now reject him? Most of them seek to make the language of the psalm applicable only to David. This explanation fails upon several counts. First, there was no such general conspiracy or plot to keep David from becoming king as would warrant the language of the first two verses. Secondly, it was never the intent of God to make the nations the heritage of David, nor give him the remotest bounds of the earth for a possession. It is true that David defeated the nations adjacent to Palestine, and carried off gold and silver from Moab, Edom, the Ammonites, the Philistines, and Amalek. It is also true that "The Lord gave the victory to David wherever he went." But "David reigned over all Israel; and he administered justice and equity to all his people" (1 Chron. 18:11-14). The second psalm has reference to a greater

and nobler king on the holy hill of Zion.

Psalm 16

This is another prophetic psalm with both a literal and extended meaning. In its primary sense it portrays the supreme trust of the author in God, who is declared to be his refuge, his sole delight, portion and cup. There is an interesting contrast in verses 3 and 4. The sole source of *delight* for the saints is God, but those who choose another god "multiply their *sorrows."* There are two sets of figures used. One is characterized by the words: portion, lot, lines, heritage. This is a reference to the subdivision of Canaan among the tribes and has to do with possession. God is affirmed to be the possession and dwelling-place of faithful saints. The other figure is found in the word "cup." The polytheistic heathen poured out their libations to their idols. The writer says "Their libations of blood will I pour out . . . The Lord . . . is my cup" (verses 4, 5).

In its remote sense, the psalm is a prediction of the triumphal resurrection of Christ, looking to his coronation. Peter quotes it on Pentecost to substantiate the fact that God had raised up Christ, "having loosed the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it." This is predicated upon the statement of David, "I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be moved; therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; moreover my flesh will dwell in hope. For thou wilt not abandon my soul to Hades, nor let thy Holy One see corruption" (Acts 2:24-27). Peter declares that David was a prophet and "foresaw and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption" (verse 31).

Paul in his synagogue speech at Antioch, in Pisidia, quotes from both the psalms and the prophets (Psalm 2; Psalm 16; Isa. 55:3; Hab. 1:5). Speaking of Jesus, he says, "And as for the fact

that he raised him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, he spoke in this way, 'I will give you the holy and sure mercies of David.' Therefore he says also in another psalm, 'Thou wilt not let thy Holy One see corruption.' For David, after he had served the counsel of God in his own generation, fell asleep, and was laid with his fathers, and saw corruption; but he whom God raised up saw no corruption" (Acts 13:34-36). Surely Psalm 16 is Messianic in nature.

Psalm 45

Passing over the beautiful and stirring Psalm 22, so descriptive of the agony and death of Jesus upon the cross, we notice Psalm 45, as more closely allied to the purpose of this book. The title designates it as "a love song" and the studious reader will observe that it is a song poem to celebrate the marriage of a king. The prelude is given in verse 1, where the writer declares he is "bubbling over" with a goodly theme, so that his tongue is as free with words as the pen of an accomplished scribe, when he addresses his verses to the king.

In verses 2-9, is a special ode to the bridegroom who "rides forth victoriously for the cause of truth and to defend the right." Verses 10-12 contain an address to the bride with the admonition that if "you will forget your people, and your father's house, the king will desire your beauty." A description of the pageantry in the bridal procession is furnished in verses 13-15, and a final address to the king culminates the song, so filled with beautiful Oriental imagery.

The psalm is of special interest in our investigation because it affirms to the king, "Your divine throne endures for ever and ever. Your royal scepter is a scepter of equity; you love righteousness and hate wickedness. Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your fellows" (verses 6, 7). The writer of the Hebrews appropriates through

the Holy Spirit, this statement to advance his argument for the supremacy of the Messiah over the angels. After setting forth the idea that the Christ was superior because he had obtained a more excellent name than theirs, because angels were commanded to worship him, and because of the nature and mission of these celestial servants, he proceeds to establish it further by showing that Christ occupies the throne and wields the scepter in the kingdom. He clinches the argument with the citation that the anointing of the Messiah was beyond that of his comrades, i.e., his angelic associates in heaven. Of course, the character of the reign is shown in the fact that the scepter is one of righteousness, and its possessor one who loved righteousness, while detesting lawlessness.

Psalm 110

We come now to consider one of the most remarkable of Psalms. Martin Luther declared it was "worthy to be set in a frame of gold and diamonds." It is a majestic tribute to one who was destined to be what David could not be, a combination of king and priest. The psalmist seems to be listening in on a conversation between God and His Son. He hears the former give an invitation, "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool" (verse 1).

In prophetical symbolism, the "right hand" signifies a place of authority and power. The invitation is for Christ to occupy that place of authority. This indicates that the rule had previously belonged to God, else he could not transfer it. The theocracy is to give way to a Christocracy, a rule of God's anointed.

The transfer of power is to be for a specific time and a specific purpose. It is to be a rule of conquest. The enemies of God are to be conquered and subjugated. The authority is to be invested in Christ until that is accomplished. When the last foe

has been rendered helpless and destroyed, the reign will cease. The term "footstool" as applied to an enemy comes from the ancient custom of a conquering chieftain forcing his vanquished foes to bow down while he placed his foot upon the prostrate forms and proclaimed his victory over them. You may read about this custom in Joshua 10:24.

It was this first verse of Psalm 110 which Jesus employed with such devastating effect against the Pharisees, after asking them, "What think you of Christ, whose son is he?" After the question and quotation "no one was able to answer him a word, nor from that day did any one dare to ask him any more questions" (Matt. 22:42-46; Mark 12:36).

Verse 2 says, "The Lord sends forth from Zion your mighty scepter. Rule in the midst of your foes." The former verse constitutes a report of a conversation or statement of God to His Son, but in this verse the Son is directly addressed. Again in verse 1, we read of the extension, nature, power and duration of the kingdom, but in this verse we learn of the place where the power will first be manifest, and from which it will go forth in universal dominion. It is for that reason loyal citizens of the heavenly regime are said to have "come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem" (Heb. 12:22). Here it is that the mighty scepter is wielded so effectively.

Verse 3 of the psalm affirms that the reign of the Messiah will not be manifested in an autocratic or despotic fashion. There will be no involuntary subjugation to the divine sway, upon the part of the subjects of the kingdom. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power" is but an expression of voluntary submission to One who loved them and gave Himself for them. Contrary to the system under the old covenant which enrolled those who were infants and needed to be taught to know the Lord after enrollment, the arrangement under the Messiah requires that men first be taught to know the Lord, and then come to him by choice (Heb. 8:10, 11).

Verse 4 is one of great moment in the consideration of the divine purpose relating to the kingdom. It demonstrates that the Messiah was to occupy a two-fold position, being a priest as well as a king. "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." Let us notice some of the points involved in this prediction.

1. It was so important in the divine plan that it was confirmed with a sacred oath. The Levitical priests were not inducted into office by oath, and the fact that the oath was a part of the inaugural ceremony of the Christ is urged as a proof of the superiority of his priesthood (Heb. 7:20-22).

2. The unchangeable and immutable nature of the prediction was manifest in the assertion that the Lord would not repent. This indicates an inflexible purpose, not subject to any alteration by virtue of condition or circumstance.

3. The promise here made implies a change of law. The Messiah was to be of the tribe of Judah "of which Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood" (Heb. 7:14). The Mosaic economy was to be superseded and abrogated. "For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law" (Heb. 7:12).

4. The priesthood of the Messiah would not be subject to change or be affected by law of succession. He was to be a priest "for ever." The Levitical priesthood was altered repeatedly by the demise of its occupants. "And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death; but this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood" (Heb. 7:23, 24).

5. The priesthood of Aaron's sons was to be supplanted by that of the order of Melchizedek, who was so great that the patriarch Abraham honored him by presentation of tithes, and was blessed by him in turn (Heb. 7:4-6). Thus the Messiah was

to be both king and priest upon his throne.

6. This fact is further predicted by Zechariah in his prophecy regarding the man whose name is The Branch (the Nazarene). It was declared that "He shall build the temple of the Lord; and shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest on his throne" (Zech. 6:13). Three facts are affirmed about his throne as follows: (1) He will sit on it; (2) He will rule on it; (3) He will be a priest upon it. When we find the Messiah sitting at the right hand of God, and acting in the capacity of a priest, we shall know he is upon his throne and ruling in his kingdom. One passage alone should be sufficient proof that the Messiah is now king and that the kingdom has come. "Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens" (Heb. 8:1).

The temple of God has been erected. The tabernacle of David has been repaired and re-built. The scepter of Judah is even now in the hand of "him whose right it is." The reign of heaven is here. "The Branch" is sitting upon the throne of his father David. He is king and priest, mediator and intercessor, author and finisher of the faith, Alpha and Omega of our Hope. In him prophecy and history meet, and their united testimony confirms the eternal purpose.

The Stone that Became a Mountain

Contents

The book of Daniel provides a rich treasury of material for the student of the kingdom of the Messiah. Daniel was carried into exile in Babylon by the army of Nebuchadnezzar, in 606 B. C., when Jehoiakim, king of Judah was delivered into the hands of the Chaldeans. He was one of those youths who were "without blemish, handsome and skilful in all wisdom, endowed with knowledge, understanding learning, and competent to serve in the king's palace." Because of his fidelity, God gave him understanding "in all visions and dreams." The record bearing his name is a compilation of both prophecy and history. In it are found recorded not only the visions of Daniel, but also his interpretation of visions manifested to the heathen kings, Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar.

Our present purpose will not permit of an extended exposition of all the points in this remarkable book, and we must content ourselves with an analysis of one of the visions of Nebuchadnezzar, with occasional reference to other salient and relevant material. The reader is urged to read chapter 2 of Daniel, and to carefully note the contents.

Briefly the facts are these. Nebuchadnezzar had certain dreams which perturbed him greatly, troubled his spirit and drove sleep from his eyes. The actual dreams departed from his memory, so he summoned his court magicians and sorcerers, and demanded that they inform him of the dreams and then interpret them. Failure to do this would result in their being torn

limb from limb, and their houses laid in ruins. The enchanters were in dismay, and said, "There is not a man on earth who can meet the king's demand."

This enraged the king who accused them of stalling for time, and in his fierce anger he ordered all of the wise men slain. Arioch, the captain of the king's guard, was entrusted with the mission of slaying the counsellors, which was to include Daniel, and his companions from the land of Judah. However, Daniel spoke with such prudence and discretion to Arioch, that he was permitted to go in and secure a reprieve for a stated time. Daniel returned to his house and with his friends petitioned God, who gave him the solution in a vision by night.

When Daniel was brought before the monarch, he made it clear that none of the Chaldean Magi could explain the mystery. He further declared that there was a God in heaven who revealed mysteries and had chosen this method of making known what would be in the latter days. This term, when used by the prophets, generally had reference to the age of the Messiah. That the dream and vision of the heathen king were prophetic, is evidenced by the following statement, "To you, O king, as you lay in bed came thoughts of what would be hereafter." We are about to study one of the most amazing revelations of the rise and fall of four great universal kingdoms, which were to be overthrown by a fifth world kingdom which would never crumble. The king to whom this was depicted was the head of the first of these, and it was appropriate that to him should be given the preview of the unfolding drama of world history.

The Dream

Nebuchadnezzar saw a giant figure of a man, luminous and imposing, which was awe-inspiring and frightening. The image was composed of different metals, having a head of gold, breast

and arms of silver, belly and thighs of brass, legs of iron, and feet of iron mixed with clay. As the king viewed the image, a stone was quarried without use of human hands, and this stone dashed against the feet of the image with such force as to shatter them and topple the entire image in a mass of fragmentary debris which became like the chaff on a summer threshing floor, all of which was carried away by the wind until not a trace of the image remained. The stone then grew into a mountain of such proportion as to fill the whole earth.

The Components

It is essential that we list the various figurative elements which require notice in our attempt to understand the significance of this remarkable vision. They are as follows:

1. The head of gold.

2. The breast and arms of silver.

3. The belly and thighs of brass.

4. The legs of iron.

5. The feet of iron and clay.

6. The stone cut out without hands.

7. The mountain which filled the earth.

General Observations

In his interpretation, Daniel shows that the idolatrous image represents four mighty and successive world powers, of which the Chaldean (Babylonian), which then held him captive, was the first. The key to this part of the prophecy is found in the portrayal of this initial one of the four. "The God of heaven has

given the kingdom, the power, and the might, and the glory. Into your hand he has given, wherever they dwell, the sons of men, the beasts of the field, and the birds of the air, making you rule over them all." This can be nothing less than world dominion. But this universal sway was to be transient and transferable, until a fifth kingdom was set up which would completely destroy the preceding four, and yet would itself never be destroyed. It is evident that the seed of decay which was in the first four would be wholly lacking from the fifth.

It is worthy of remark that the same four universal empires were also pictured to Daniel in a vision which is described in chapter 7. In his dream, however, they were viewed as fearsome wild beasts, rising successively from the agitated waves of the Mediterranean Sea, as it was churned and tossed by the four winds of heaven. To the proud and haughty heathen monarch, who was a worshiper of Bel and Nego, these mighty nations appeared as an impressive and awe-inspiring image; to the captive Daniel they appeared as ferocious, bloodthirsty, persecuting powers. The God of heaven adapts his revelation to the state of those to whom it is given.

The giant image represented prophecy in a systematic form. The various portions were composed of diverse elements, yet all were related to each other in such a fashion as to form one body, indicative of the idea that all were motivated and regulated by the same principle. There was no room between the divisions, but each was immediately successive to its predecessor, so that it would appear that each one after the first, grew out of the preceding one. The nations symbolized must be consecutive in order and appearance and as there was an unbroken and unified prophecy there must be the same kind of history in fulfillment of the prophecy.

It will be observed that the component elements were on a descending scale of values from the first through the last, starting with the head of gold and ending with iron mingled with

clay. This denotes a natural deterioration in the empires prefigured. In prophecy, different metals are used to indicate various degrees of worth, excellence, dignity, political strength or durability. Clay or dust indicates weakness or instability. Thus, iron mingled with clay would represent an admixture of strength and weakness produced by coalitions and alliances of various kinds.

The nations of the world were assigned their places in prophecy only as they came in contact with the chosen people of God. When they maligned, persecuted or subjugated the elect, they appeared on the screen of God's predictions, to receive advance notice of their coming fate. Thus it was with Egypt (Jeremiah 46); the Philistines (Jeremiah 47); Moab (Jeremiah 48); the Ammonites (Jeremiah 49:1-6); Edom (Jeremiah 49:7-11), etc. The key to such prophecies is found in the pronouncement upon Moab: "Make him drunk, because he magnified himself against the Lord; so that Moab shall wallow in his vomit, and he too shall be held in derision. Was not Israel a derision to you? Was he found among thieves, that whenever you spoke of him, you wagged your head?" (Jeremiah 48:26, 27).

The four world empires symbolized in the giant image all held sway over the people of God in regular succession. The first, Babylon, made three expeditions against Jerusalem, finally, in 586 B.C., destroying both the city and temple. At this time, Zedekiah, king of Judah, was captured in the plains of Jordan, while attempting to escape to the Arabah. He was taken to the Babylonian king at Riblah, who slew his sons in his presence, put out his eyes, bound him in fetters and took him to Babylon. This fulfilled the statement of Ezekiel with reference to Zedekiah, who was called a profane, wicked prince. "Thus saith the Lord God: Remove the diadem, and take off the crown . . . Perverted, perverted, perverted will I make it, and it shall be no more until he come whose right it is, and I will give it him" (Ezekiel 21:26, 27). Not another king of the lineage of David occupied the throne until he came "whose right it is."

It was in a strange land, when Judah was in exile, with no city, temple or daily sacrifice, that God reassured his people through Daniel's interpretation of the night vision of the haughty ruler who had carried them captive. In spite of sword, famine and pestilence, of slavery and bondage, God still knew his people. He had not forgotten his promise to David. Thus a calendar of history was presented in the form of a towering giant, and nation after nation would exercise universal dominion, until the fulness of time ushered in another kingdom which would smite the oppressing powers and vanquish them forever. There was destined to be a clash between the universal ambitions of the sons of men, and the benevolent rule of the Son of God, but the outcome was already determined. "The dream is certain and its interpretation sure."

The Heathen Monarchies

The four universal governments are plainly, identified in the Bible, the names of all being given. The stone smote the feet of the image, "thus indicating the time when the things it symbolized would be abrogated and destroyed. The kingdom of God was to be set up in the days of the fourth world power.

1. *The head of gold.* **This represented the kingdom of the Chaldeans, or Babylonians. The first name was derived from the country, the second from the capital city (Dan. 4:29, 30). At the time of the vision, it embodied the vast territories of Chaldea, Assyria, Arabia, Syria and Palestine. It was aptly called "the hammer of the whole earth" (Jeremiah 50:23). But the doom of Babylon was decreed, and the power to overthrow her was named. "The Lord has stirred up the spirit of the kings of the Medes, because his purpose concerning Babylon is to destroy it" (Jeremiah 51:11). Accordingly, "Belshazzar the Chaldean king was slain. And Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being about sixty-two years old" (Daniel 5:30). This was in 536 B. C.**

2. *The breast and arms of silver.* **This is a symbol of Medo-Persia. This great power began with Darius the Mede, uncle to the Persian, Cyrus the Great. The latter became sole governor of Medo-Persia upon the death of Darius. That this is the kingdom which Daniel predicted would succeed the Chaldean, is evident from the handwriting which appeared upon the palace of Belshazzar, a part of which was thus interpreted: "Your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians." This combined kingdom is mentioned in Daniel 5:28; 6:8, 12, 15; 8:20; Esther 1:3.**

3. *The belly and thighs of bronze.* **This symbolizes the third universal empire, which is the Macedonian, or Grecian. It was founded by Philip of Macedon, but received its greatest extension under his son, Alexander the Great, who swept like a flaming meteor across the world's surface. This young and daring general overthrew Darius Codomanus, at Arbela, October 2, 331 B. C., thus ending the famous Persian empire.**

The appearance of brass, or bronze, in this part of the image is peculiarly appropriate. All historians of note mention the "brazen-coated Greeks." The famous Macedonian soldiers all wore armor of burnished brass, and carried shields and weapons of the same metal. The sunlight glinting from the armor when they assembled in battle array was dazzling and luminous.

The regime of Alexander was as brief as it was startling in its accomplishments. He died in B.C. 323 leaving no suitable heir or successor. As a result his kingdom was divided between his four chief generals, Cassander, Lysimachus, Ptolemy and Seleucus. Cassander received Macedon and Greece; Lysimachus received Thrace and the countries bordering the Hellespont; Ptolemy ruled over Egypt, Libya, Palestine and Arabia; while Babylon, Media, Persia and Assyria, fell to the lot of Seleucus. In process of time these were combined under two heads; the Lagidae in Egypt, and the Seleucidae in Syria. The kingdom of

Greece is identified by name as the conqueror of Medo-Persia in Daniel 8:20, 21.

4. *The legs of iron.* **This metal is a symbol of strength and crushing power. "There shall be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron, because iron breaks in pieces and shatters all things." History reveals the mighty Roman Empire as the fourth world power. Perhaps the two legs of the giant man signify the two divisions of the former empire which were combined to create the world dominion of Rome. The kingdom of the Seleucidae reached its culmination when Pompey defeated Antiochus in 65 B.C., that of the Lagidae was terminated in 30 B.C., when Octavius Caesar captured Alexandria, after having already defeated Anthony and Cleopatra at the battle of Actium. With these conquests, Rome became the mistress of the whole world. The iron hand had crushed, shattered and broken all opposition. That the kingdom of the Caesars was a world dominion is proven by Luke 2:1. That it was the empire whose capital was Rome is determined by comparing Acts 25:10-12 with Acts 28:16. All of the four kingdoms are named in the sacred scriptures.**

5. *The feet and toes of potter's clay and iron.* **"And as you saw the feet and toes partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it shall be a divided kingdom; but some of the firmness of iron shall be in it, just as you saw iron mixed with the miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were partly iron and partly clay, so the kingdom will be partly strong and partly broken." The ten toes of the giant image are representative of the same thing as the ten horns of the fourth beast described in Daniel 7:7. These symbolize the ten divisions composing the Roman Empire.**

Iron and potter's clay are the exact opposites in texture and nature. The first is strong and crushes all things; the second is fragile and easily shattered. Thus the fourth dominion was to maintain the power and strength to batter down all opposition, but at the same time was to possess such qualities of weakness

and fragility as would prove its own undoing. The empire was "partly brittle" as a result of its methods of extension and growth. By force, treaty, colonization, coalition and intermarriage, vast portions of the habitable earth were brought under the dominance of Rome, but it is one thing to encircle diverse nations, and a totally different thing to absorb and assimilate them. Herein lay the weakness of Rome. She had the strength to capture but lacked the power and time to consolidate. "As you saw the iron mixed with miry clay, so they will mix with one another in marriage, but they will not hold together, just as iron does not mix with clay."

The Stone

In the vision, a stone appeared which was not cut out by human hand. It smote the image on the feet and shattered it. Daniel explained this as a picturization of the effect of a fifth universal dominion. It differed from the other four in the following points:

a. Origin

b. Effect

c. Nature

d. Durability

Insofar as origin was concerned, it was divine. The expression "without hands" indicates absence of all human agency. In Hebrews 9:24 it is said, "Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands," which is the equivalent of saying he is "a minister of the true tabernacle which God pitched, and not man" (8:2). Our spiritual body is spoken of as "a house not made with hands" and this is said in the same verse to be "a building of God" (2 Corinthians 5:1). Thus, the kingdom of the stone was of divine origin.

The previous world powers were established and gained their universal dominion by human sagacity and ingenuity, by military genius and prowess, by force of arms and strategy of attack, but the kingdom set up by the God of heaven was not dependent upon any of these. Indeed its strength lay in the fact that it proceeded not from these considerations. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts" (Zech. 4:6).

The effect of the kingdom represented by the stone was altogether different than that of the previous powers. They merely absorbed and perpetuated the wealth, subjects, territory and spirit of their predecessors. Each preceding kingdom lived again in the acts and deeds of the one succeeding it, so that it might be said as spoken by the seer upon Patmos, "He exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him" (Revelation 13:12). The form, the seat of government, the officials and the sovereigns, these were changed with the coming of each regime, but the spirit and nature were perpetuated.

The Medes and Persians smote the Chaldeans, the Greeks smote the Persians, the Romans smote the Greeks, yet the man remained entire, the image was unbroken. Of these very kingdoms it was said, "They had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time" (Daniel 7:12). That which keeps a man alive is his spirit. The spirit of world dominion was not destroyed when Babylon, Medo-Persia and Greece fell to the superior powers which were actuated by the same motives. The stone smote the image with such force that "the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold, all together were broken in pieces." These became like chaff and the wind carried them away, so that not a trace of them could be found. The spirit which prompted such powers was to be forever crushed, and never to be resurrected while the earth remains.

This brings us to the fact that the nature of the kingdom of the stone was to be diverse from that of the universal

monarchies. They exerted cruel and tyrannical pressure against the people of God. They were held together by idolatry and fear. But the kingdom of God would consist of the people of God, and would be maintained by faith and love. The world empires existed upon the principle that might makes right. This was the spirit which animated them. The kingdom of heaven is motivated by an opposite principle, that right makes might. This is the true source of power. These two could not exist side by side in God's universe and under his moral sway. So the stone was destined to clash with the image and as a result the idolatrous empires were to be swept away.

This clash of divergent ideologies was to come during the Roman empire. The stone smote the image upon the feet. This was an auspicious time for the Messiah to be enthroned and for the test to be made. Rome had subjugated the whole world. It was an era of peace upon earth. The kingdoms of men had reached their zenith. It was a golden age of the empire. The benign influence of Grecian culture bathed the intellects of men as the enervating rays of the sun falling upon the earth. Yet it was an age of lassitude, doubt and weariness. Faith in the old gods had been undermined, the servile classes were tired, helpless and hopeless. The temples of Jupiter and Apollo were still standing, but gone was that simple trust which once was placed in these imaginary deities. The cultured world had turned to Philosophy, which led its devotees into dead-end streets of human reasoning and left them no room to turn around.

The patrician of Rome believed that his city and empire would last forever. This was "the Eternal City." Religion consisted of absolute reverence of the emperor. The State represented the highest good. True patriotism consisted in this belief. To live and die for the state was the whole duty of man. The state was all in all. The Roman emperor as the highest representative of the state was the chief deity. At the altar erected to him sacrifices were offered which glorified the power

and majesty of his universal sovereignty. The highest virtue attainable unto man was to devote his all to the state.

It was at this time Christianity, symbolized by the stone, was launched upon the earth. It was still just a stone, small in comparison with the giant image seen in the vision of the haughty Nebuchadnezzar. It had, as the captain of its host, one who had been crucified as a common criminal. Its emissaries were not politically powerful, rich, learned or cultured. They were tradesmen, soldiers, fishermen, publicans— the despised and poor of the world. But they challenged all to open combat. With a daring born of true conviction, they hurled down the gauntlet to philosophers and commoners alike. The issue was clear-cut. To the Christian, the highest of all things was not the mighty Caesar, nor the Roman empire. He rendered unto Caesar what was his, but declared his subjection to another and greater king. He asserted that Rome herself was not the hope of the universe, but rather declared that "here we have no continuing city." He insisted upon taking his message to all nations and of enlisting them under another standard than the golden eagle.

And Rome recognized the battle for what it was, the call to a battle which must end only when one of the militant foes was vanquished and "no trace remained." The charge was clearly stated: "They advocate customs which it is not lawful for us Romans to accept or practice" (Acts 16:21). The Christians were branded as atheists, haters of the human race, and enemies of virtue. Rome fought with insensate fury, with the sword, rack, stake, rope of strangulation, fire and dungeon. Her life and all she held dear was threatened. She must destroy all that was Christian, or go down for ever into oblivion. Every Christian was guilty of treason in the most aggravated form, and treason could be dealt with by only one penalty— death to the traitor.

The humble followers of the Messiah did not become dismayed, for their faith recognized no odds. They were

valorous in life but victorious in death, for their courage was stronger than death. To the heathen death was the one thing to be most feared; to the Christian it was gain. These men knew how to die because they had learned how to live. Because they had something worthy to live for, they had something worth dying for. And if they taught the faith in life, they proved their faith in death. They met death, not with contempt or indifference, but in a certain and sure hope of victory. How could the pagan empire win? Every world empire had been launched upon the power to threaten death to its enemies. Now a new kingdom had arisen whose citizens rejoiced in death, welcomed the freedom it brought, and went to join their King by dying. The state could persecute men, abrogate deeds, kill bodies, but it could not with sword or fire touch faith— the faith which refused to worship any earthly thing, even the Roman state. The kingdom of the stone was different!

There was a contrast in durability also. "In the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall its sovereignty be left to other people . . . and it shall stand for ever." The principle of self-destruction was contained in each of the heathen monarchies. As might decreased, others arose in strength and the sovereignty passed to other people. The Assyrians were lost in the Babylonians, they in turn in the Medes, these in the Persians, the Persians in the Greeks, the Greeks in the Syrians and Egyptians, these in the Romans, and the Romans in the Gothic hordes. This could be only because each monarchy had other rivals in the same field, and all that was essential to loss of sovereignty was the growth of a superior force. But no such rival exists, or can exist, in the field of the kingdom of God, for it is armed only with truth, and there can be no disharmony or conflict between truths.

The kingdom of the stone will continue as long as its Maker. Dying men establish dying realms; only a living God can establish an eternal kingdom. Truth is constant, unwavering,

everlasting.

"Truth crushed to earth shall rise again,

The eternal years of God are hers;

While error wounded writhes in pain

And dies among her worshippers."

The dreams of the king, and the interpretation of the prophet, came at a time when the fortunes of Israel were at a low ebb. The Chaldeans had swooped down upon the holy city and the chosen people of God had been carried into exile beyond the Euphrates. Yet it was at this very time when the power of Babylon seemed invincible, and the people of the Lord appeared to be powerless, that God revealed the coming destruction of the former, and the ultimate triumph of His purpose. Is there not in this fact a source of cheer and hope in all ages when the faithful are harassed and troubled by the forces of this world? Man's extremity truly provides God's opportunity, and His grace is made perfect in man's weakness.

To those who have fled for refuge to the mountain that grew out of the stone there is no cause for fear. No weapon formed against it can prosper. No machinations of the evil one can shake its foundation. Security and peace can be found only in the kingdom that shall never be broken in pieces. Tyranny has its day, and despotism rules but a moment. History is filled with the accounts of puny men who sought to elevate themselves to the heights, only to have their hopes dashed and destroyed by the grasping hand of death. The road to greatness is not paved with the stones of selfishness, but with those of self-denial. The stone which crushed the giant image is destined to grind into powder every vain ambition of mankind.

The Mountain

The kingdom set up by the God of heaven did not appear as a mountain at first. When it clashed with the principle of tyranny as exhibited in the mighty empire of the Caesars it did so as a stone, which appeared insignificant in contrast with the giant image it was destined to destroy. It grew into a mountain. At first it occupied but a small and isolated part of the world. The process by which it filled the whole earth was one of gradual growth.

This accords with the facts. The might of Rome was challenged by a humble group of men and women, who were mainly slaves, uneducated, poor and despised. Without literal sword, spear or shield, and by the shedding of no blood except their own they met the challenge of world tyranny and overcame it. Within a few centuries the Caesars were toppled from their throne.

There will never be another world power such as was exhibited by Babylon, Persia, Greece or Rome. The ambitions of men may prompt them to seek universal sway over the nations of the earth, but they will be doomed to disappointment, frustration and defeat. Napoleon Bonaparte, the German Kaiser, Adolf Hitler— all these have suffered the fate which will overtake all who dare to defy the edict of prophecy. There were four universal empires of men, and no more. With the inception of the fifth, established by the God of heaven, demanding universal allegiance, there can never be another. A mountain in prophecy signifies a great kingdom, while hills signify lesser powers. "The mountain of the Lord's house is established in the top of the mountains and exalted above the hills."

There is one important fact which should not be overlooked in the symbolism of the giant man. The kingdom of God was pitted against four world dominions. It was not opposed to government as such. Its opposition was to four

specific powers, and even then, not because they were governmental, but because of the spirit or principle which animated them. These powers were idolatrous (the giant image), and cruel (the wild beasts). The prophecy is clear. "It shall break in pieces *all these* kingdoms, and bring *them* to an end." Not all kingdoms, but all *these* kingdoms.

The giant image did not represent civil government, as such, in opposition to the kingdom of God. It represented four world tyrannies over men which existed as enslaving forces, through abuse of the principle of government. The kingdom of God has never set itself against the principle of government. It has never even sought to change or alter the form of government in any land. It is by nature opposed to evil, and recognizes that evil men may seize the governments of men and manipulate them to their own personal interest and gain, just as the same kind of men may seize control of the churches and "make merchandise of souls." But it does not oppose the right of civil government to exist to serve in its proper sphere because of abuses of power, any more than it opposes the right of the church to exist to serve in its proper sphere because of abuses of power.

So long as Caesar properly conducts civil affairs he acts within the sanction of God. In this respect, and in this respect only, he is a minister of God for good. If he infringes upon a field other than his own he is condemned, not because he is a civil ruler, but because he gets out of his place. The angels that sinned were not cast down to the pits of nether gloom because they were angels, but because "they did not keep their own position, but left their proper dwelling" (Jude 6). Other angels which did not over-step their boundaries, and other governments were not destroyed merely because the four great cruel pagan empires crushed out the rights of men. The great mistake of the sinning angels was rebellion against God. The grave error of the four heathen monarchies was in forgetting that they were ministers of God, and in seeking to become God.

The prince of glory, who was soon to be coronated as ruler upon the throne of heaven, announced the principle of his authority and its extent. "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." There are things within the realm of Caesar. They must be given unto him whose right they are. There are things that belong unto God. They must be given to him. They need not conflict. But emperor worship is sinful. Caesar is a servant of God. He is not God. When he seeks to become God he must be removed, not because he is Caesar, but because he thinks that he is God.

The God of heaven did not abdicate his universal moral dominion when he set up the special kingdom of David, nor has he relinquished it merely because his Son sits upon the throne of David. Civil government is merely an expression in systematic form of the united mind of society. It is a manifestation in codified form of a social consciousness, by which rights are recognized, the weak protected, the distressed relieved, the helpless provided asylum, and the properties certified and guaranteed to their owners. The ruler "is the servant of God to execute his wrath on the wrongdoer" (Rom. 13:4). So long as the ruler thus acts, he conforms to God's will and purpose.

So long as the kingdom of God exists, that long will this earth be safe from another universal dominion. But that kingdom will last for ever. It cannot be captured, overthrown or destroyed. Its sovereignty cannot be left to other people. There is no room upon earth for two kingdoms, utterly opposed to each other, both of which fill the whole earth. The mountain of God fills the whole earth. No other kingdom can again do so. In order to do that it would have to dethrone Jesus from his place in the hearts of men. And imperfect though our service be, as rendered unto him, yet his sovereignty, his right to rule, is recognized by countless millions scattered over the face of the globe.

"Joy to the world! the Lord is come;

Let earth receive her king;

Let every heart prepare him room,

And heaven and nature sing.

He rules the earth with truth and grace,

And makes the nations prove

The glories of his righteousness

And wonders of his love."

The Fulness of Time

Contents

The apostle to the Gentiles wrote, "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son" (Gal. 4:4). Mark records the initial proclamation of Jesus in these words, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand" (1:15). It would no doubt overwhelm us all to know the full complement of the expression "fulness of time." That it involved far more than a mere calendar date should be apparent to even a casual student. Certainly the God of the universe would not inaugurate a new creation without arranging every phase and feature of that universe which would in any manner affect his design.

We have already learned of the divine manipulation of history to accomplish a supreme purpose. It is but reasonable to conclude that all the earth would be readied to contribute to that great period when the heir to the kingdom would walk among men to associate with them and enunciate the fundamental and foundational principles of his reign. Of course, the marshaling of the forces of creation would not be understood by them, but as involuntary servants they would take their places in line until just at the proper moment nothing would be lacking. It would require a volume much larger than the one you hold to detail for you the essential forces working in coalition to achieve the divine purpose, but we can enumerate a few items which would materially assist the spread of the kingdom.

1. A universal empire which would grant protection and traveling rights to its citizenry, so that they might freely bear a

message to every part of the earth.

2. A common tongue used especially by men in the commercial realm or the world of trade, so that writings circulated in such a language would be generally understandable.

3. Good roads which would speed the courier on his way and make it possible to hasten any news of importance.

4. Freedom of trade between nations, assuring that ships would regularly sail the seas and passenger vessels be available to the traveler.

5. An era of peace, and international tranquillity, that the message go not unheeded amidst the turmoil and strife of war, with its dangers and distractions.

6. A general air of expectancy which would enhance the eagerness for the reception of the message and guarantee that it would be readily considered.

7. A state of discontent with previous forms of religion, and a weariness with reference to the old worship, its rituals, and its sacrifices.

8. A yearning for fellowship and brotherhood which would create a favorable attitude toward any organization based upon these factors, rather than one of hostility toward that which is new.

9. A people who had been taught the elements of the new relationship, dispersed among the nations of the earth, regularly carrying on a worship akin to the one to be introduced, to act as a leavening influence.

The records of the first century bear witness to the fact that all of the above mentioned features were in absolute readiness. The whole world, religiously, morally, politically and intellectually was ripe for the greatest event of all ages. The guiding hand of divine providence, although unseen, surely and quietly moved the various parts of the world like chessmen on a gaming board, and the time had come for the mighty drama foretold by the ancient prophets, to be enacted.

No investigation of the reign of the Messiah can be complete which separates it from the preceding events of God's administration; none can be proper which ignores the contemporary picture. It is only when interpreted in the light of its setting that it can be evaluated with accuracy. In reviewing the aforementioned factors we are but touching the highlights of the subject, yet these may help to portray the pregnancy of the time.

1. The world of the first century was the empire of Rome. This fourth, and last, of the mighty universal political dominions, held undisputed sway over at least a hundred diverse races of men, and from the Rhine River to the bleak wastes of the Sahara Desert, one man controlled the earthly destiny of a polyglot mass of humanity. The Roman eagle was proudly held aloft as the standard of farflung units of a vast army. In every corner of the civilized world a Roman citizen found police protection. A violation of his civil rights would be reviewed by a procurator, and appeal could be made to Caesar's court if deemed necessary. Moreover, a citizen could freely cross the boundary line of any province or territory without a passport. The mere announcement of Roman citizenship was sufficient to guarantee safe and speedy passage. At no time in our modern world has it been possible to circulate among nations as easily as in that century when Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

The importance of this can be easily seen in the selection of Saul, a Cilician Jew, as ambassador to the Gentiles for the

kingdom of God. A Roman citizen by birth, he traversed the provinces of his day unchallenged and undaunted. When beaten by the magistrates of a Roman colony, composed chiefly of the retired soldiers of the army of Augustus, he demanded dignified treatment and safe conduct and his demand was granted (Acts 16:36-39). He heard the town clerk disband a mob gathered to assault him, by pointing out that court sessions were held at appointed times, and there were proconsuls to judge, and illegal assemblies would be quelled by force of Roman arms (Acts 19:38-41). Once, when a group of furious Jews attempted to kill him, a squad of Roman soldiers rescued him and carried him into their barracks. The chief captain was stricken with fright because he had bound him and was about to scourge him (Acts 22:25-29). Upon demand for a bodyguard, 470 infantrymen and cavalrymen were assigned for his personal safety, and when he finally made an appeal to the hearing of Augustus it was immediately granted and ratified.

2. It is true that Rome subjugated Greece, and the remnants of the world conquest of Alexander the Great were amalgamated under the banner of the Caesars. But while Rome conquered Greece militarily, the conqueror fell to the conquered culturally. There was a strange fascination about Greek learning. Rude barbarians fell under its spell, foreign philosophers came in contact with it, and neither was ever the same again. Under the blue skies reflected in the Aegean waters, the inhabitants of Greece rose to new heights. Her poets, historians, philosophers and instructors were without rival elsewhere on earth.

Motivated by belief in lovely myths, she created architectural beauty, inaugurated glorious festal seasons, inspired literature, and endowed art with a new meaning. The Greek manner of life, singularly free from care, and dedicated to the enthronement of beauty and the recognition of skill permeated the whole life of the earth. And with the Greek merchants sailing their vessels to every major port of the known

world, bartering, selling, trading, it is small wonder that the Greek language became an all but universal medium of communication. It was well fitted for this role, as it was expressive, thorough and comprehensible. No other language had so many keen distinctions; no other was so adapted to convey a message to all men. The *koine* (common) Greek was not only the language of the common man, it was at the time a language common to man. The law of the theocracy given to Israel was preserved in Hebrew, a language which seemed as exclusive and segregatory as the nation to whom it was given, but the new covenant was written for all men in a language which all could grasp. This was the great contribution of the Greeks to the kingdom of the Messiah— the vehicle for conveying the heavenly message to the world of mankind.

3. Rome was the greatest highway builder in the history of the world. Modern nations build more roads and better roads, but they can only build them to their territorial boundaries and trust that neighboring nations will extend them. Rome was not hampered by any such restraints. Possessed of tens of thousands of slave laborers, many of them taken captive in war, she had an abundance of cheap labor available. Her system of colonization, unique in its time, required a means of speeding proclamations and declarations. Accordingly, from the great city of two million souls, sprawled upon the banks of the Tiber, roads reached out as spokes from a hub to the "little Romes" which existed in remote parts of the empire.

Many of these were paved and maintenance crews continually kept them in repair. In some areas toll-gates were manned and a certain amount collected for each chariot, the money thus received going for upkeep. Inns and post houses were established at intervals to care for travelers. Couriers and postal carriers regularly carried dispatches and letters. One of the most famous of the roads was the *Via Ignatia,* which was paved for five hundred miles, and was marked with milestones throughout its entire length. It was on this road Paul traveled

from Neapolis through Philippi, Amphipolis, Apollonia, and to Thessalonica. Another famous pavement was the *Via Appia* called "the Queen of the Roads," the highway upon which Paul entered the city of Rome enroute from Puteoli. It was a two lane road of stones so perfectly joined together as to appear unbroken. Little did the Caesars realize when they constructed these military roads to their colonies, that over them would pass soldiers of the cross to plant "colonies of heaven" which would one day topple them from their imperial thrones.

4. The islands of the Mediterranean could only be reached by sailing vessels. This provided also the quickest route to large areas of the mainland. And during the first century commerce was at such a peak that major ports were crowded with vessels from every section. Long before, the sea-kings of Crete had made their island a center for receiving and discharging wares. From her harbors ships sailed forth to join overland trade routes, some of them centuries old. Commercial alliances were made, money-changing was a lucrative business, and customs and banking employed many men in every thriving maritime city.

The message of a king who was to reign universally could be carried by sailors, traders, merchantmen, and sales representatives, as well as by his appointed emissaries. One notes, as he reads the Acts of Apostles, how freely Paul and his companions moved about, and how easily they could book passage and pay their fare, as did Jonah so many centuries before. These men made frequent use of the coastwise shipping lanes and any one who reads chapters 20 and 21 of Acts, cannot help but be impressed with the frequency of sailings, the accuracy of schedules, and the thoroughness of the coverage of the sea lanes.

5. Historians all marvel at the peace which settled over the earth in the reign of Augustus. Even if this period had not been favored with the birth of the Son of God, it would still be a

memorable epoch, one of the crowning ages of the history of mankind. In the month of January, 27 B.C., a regular and constitutional form of government was established. Octavianus was voted the title *Augustus* by the Senate, and while the old forms, functions and offices of the Republic were maintained in deference to popular sentiment, an absolute monarchy prevailed in all but name. By wise and judicious counsel, order was established in Rome, and the people in the provinces were made content by a just and understanding rule. Augustus has been frequently designated as the greatest ruler the world has ever known. It became a proverbial description of his regime, that "He found the city of brick, and left it of marble."

In Roman mythology, Janus, the two-headed god, from whom January took its name, was the guardian of gates and of portals. When the nation was at war, the gates of the temple of Janus were always left open; in times of peace they were closed. Although the gates had stood ajar for several hundred years, the advent of the present dispensation found them closed. The civil wars which had decimated the country and spilled so much blood had ended a generation before, and almost unbroken peace had obtained. Countries previously in constant strife had turned to the peaceful pursuits of agriculture and commerce; money formerly spent to prosecute war and purchase protection was being used in full scale building projects. New subdivisions arose on the outskirts of wealthy cities, road building projects were carried forward along the caravan routes. The age pulsated with the movement of peoples who fused into such a cosmopolitan population as is usually found in huge modern cities. As one eminent writer has expressed it, "The age-long growth of the life of humanity in that ancient world had attained its flower." The Prince of Peace was introduced to the world in an age of peace, which was previously unparalleled.

6. Jesus was born at a time when the whole earth was in a state of expectancy. He was not launched into the midst of men in a wholly unexpected time or fashion. It is true that the Jews

labored under the gravest misapprehension as to the nature of his mission and kingdom, but that they were looking for a Messiah at that time, and that they believed he would in some sense reign over his people, cannot be questioned. It is altogether possible that the hope of Israel varied in its character according to the nature of each individual who clung to it. In some cases the advent of the Messiah was expected to be wholly political, amounting to the overthrow of the Roman usurper, recovery of national independence, and a restoration of the Oriental splendor which glorified the reigns of David and Solomon. Amongst the meditative and spiritual teachers, however, a moral and spiritual era was expected, but one thing was certain, all looked for a golden age to be ushered in, and for the triumph of Judaism.

"The people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not" (Luke 3:15). This will account for the fact that neither John nor Jesus bothered to define or explain "the kingdom (reign) of heaven." They merely announced it. The Jewish world was waiting for it. The aged Simeon, just and devout, was "waiting for the consolation of Israel" (Luke 2:25). Joseph of Arimathea, an honorable member of the Sanhedrin "waited for the kingdom of God" (Mark 15:43). The carping Pharisees demanded that Jesus tell them "when the kingdom of God would come" (Luke 17:20). Even after the resurrection, the apostles questioned, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom unto Israel?"

It is a common error to assume that only the Jewish world looked for a deliverer. But the prophet Haggai, after using language directly applied to the kingdom of the Messiah (Heb. 12:26) quotes God as saying, *"The desire of all nations* **shall come: and I will fill this house with glory" (Haggai 2:7). Deprived as they were of the advantages accruing from access to the oracles of God (Rom. 3:1, 2), it is not surprising that the Gentile concept was more obscure than that of the Jews, yet they yearned for deliverance from their state, and that yearning was**

centered in the hope of a person. The Greek mind could conceive of a person who dedicated his life to service and virtue exalted to the highest heaven to sit down among the immortal gods. They could not conceive of a God coming down from heaven, emptying himself of glory, and dying for men. It was easy for them to believe the testimony of their own prophets that man was the offspring of God (Acts 17:28). The idea of God dying for man was beyond their ken; the idea of a virtuous man dying to become exalted among the gods they understood. Is it not remarkable how much more readily the Gentile mind responded to the testimony of a resurrected and exalted Christ than did the Jewish heart? The great Roman poet Virgil, who died about twenty years before Jesus was born, was but one of a number of pagan poets who seemed to sense a coming event of impending importance. An example is his *Fourth Eclogue,* **from which the following excerpts are taken.**

"The last age, decreed by Fate, has come;

And a new frame of all things does begin,

A holy progeny from heaven descends.

Auspicious be his birth! which puts an end

To the iron age! and from which shall rise

A golden age far glorious through the earth. . .

By thee what footsteps of our sins remain,

Are blotted out, and the whole world set free

From her perpetual bondage and her fear . . .

Yet some remains shall still be left

Of ancient fraud, and wars shall still go on."

It would seem that the entire world was a readied stage for

presentation of the mightiest drama of the ages.

7. Much of what has been written thus far about Rome seems good, yet there is a dark and seamy side. Peace reigned it is true, but it had been purchased at a fearful price. The great empire sprawling over a prostrate world had crushed out the ambition and hope so essential to make life worth living. The recognition of the individual, his rights, privileges and dignity, stressed by Greek philosophy, were forgotten. The wealthy, deprived of the discipline of wholesome labor, sought surcease in luxury, gluttony and immorality. When tired of feasting upon such dainties as brains of peacocks and tongues of nightingales, they retired to sumptuously furnished rooms to drink a death potion and slip into the dreamless slumber of suicide. This became almost the normal mode of death for the nobility.

The freeborn poor, forced from their farms by the encroachments of syndicates and monopolies, soon having spent their little pittance in the cities, were forced to huddle in winter over small household fires, saving a toga for burial, rather than risk wearing it to protect from the cold. These became beggars and idlers, asking only for a daily dole of bread from the government, and public entertainment at the circus or amphitheater. They were political pawns, willing to give their support to the despot who promised them the most from the public treasury. They dwelt in filthy, vermin-infested slums, creeping up the dark steps at night after a day spent lounging in idleness, climaxed by an evening in which they had yelled themselves hoarse at the brutal, bloody scenes in the arena. Below them in the social scale were the millions of slaves, bereft of family, possession, religion and rights, living an abject existence like the scavenging dogs of the street.

And in such a time, the once popular religion had lost its hold and faith had died in human hearts. The temples of the gods were still standing, but gone were the childlike superstition and simplicity with which the worshipers once thronged through

these edifices. The Olympic heaven was now empty, and only the wraiths of its former inhabitants conjured up in human minds until they became real, stalked through the bowers of fleecy clouds. Philosophy had thrust its cold steel rapier into the body of mythology, and the spirit had departed, to leave only a corpse. The poets still rhapsodized about the gods in their fantasies, but the very fact that the emperor was forced to brace the structure of polytheism with laws demanding its preservation shows how far it had sunken in the estimate of men in general. And while the populace regarded mythology as a composition of so many silly fables, hardly worthy of the scornful laugh of silly schoolboys, many became the dupes of wandering mystics, jugglers, interpreters, and every brand of religious crackpot and philosophical quack. The old faith had failed, the whole world was steeped in a spirit of apathy, languor and weariness. Man was tired, tired of his gods, his faith, and even of life. It was time for a new life to begin! The fulness of the time had arrived; it was now time for the fulness of God to arrive!

8. One of the curious manifestations of the time with which we are dealing, was the rise and multiplication of the numerous guilds of workmen, religious societies, and burial clubs. With the stamping out of individuality, there seemed to be kindled a craving for recognition of others. Workmen in the same craft joined together to form a guild or trade union. This constituted a fellowship or brotherhood. Each brotherhood selected a divinity which was looked upon as its head. The members met together regularly for common meals to which only those were admitted who had been initiated by proper conformity with some rite. Class distinctions were abolished and all, both free and slaves, were upon an equality. The poor members were ministered to from a fund collected by voluntary contributions, and any member of the guild who died was given honorable burial. The idea of a community of brethren, bound to each other by solemn vows and mutual aims, was well developed in all of these societies.

9. It should never be forgotten that the dispersion of the Jews among all the nations of the earth, by reason of capture and exile, although it seemed to militate against the design of God when first viewed from a human angle, turned out to be a vital factor in the dissemination of Christianity throughout the world. During the exile in Babylon, while cut off from the temple with its service and sacrifice, the people met together for prayer and reading of the Torah. Such gatherings at first were probably informal and may have been held on the banks of rivers such as the Chebar. Soon the meetings became regular features of the sabbath days and when Jerusalem was restored, they were augmented rather than discontinued. Thus from a spontaneous beginning, the synagogue became an outstanding part of the Jewish religious picture.

The temple with its sacerdotal caste of priests and Levites was the locale of sacrifice and ritual; the synagogue was a place of instruction, edification and prayer. There was no special ministry for the conduct of the synagogue meetings. Wherever at least ten men were willing to constitute a congregation, a synagogue could be started. A group of seniors, or elders, administered affairs and supervised the conduct of the members. Deacons, or almoners, distributed to the needs of the poor from a common fund. Discipline was regularly maintained and one who transgressed the law might be publicly censured, or even excommunicated, upon which action the individual became as "a heathen or a publican."

At the sabbath service, any man in good standing was permitted to read the Torah or Hafterah (the law and the prophets). Any brother of the assembly was free to speak for the general edification of those present. Thus Jesus, who was regarded as the son of a mere artisan, read from the prophets, and presented an exposition of the passage in the synagogue at Nazareth. After the readings from the sacred scrolls at Antioch, in Pisidia, Paul and Barnabas were told, "Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on" (Acts

13:15).

The church of God owes a debt to the synagogue. It served to cushion the shock of passing from Judaism to Christianity. The synagogue may have been a providential factor in making possible the influence of the Christian church among the Jews. Certainly the worship service of the church, as well as her government, were patterned after that of the synagogue, and the two were so closely related that in many places all that was essential in establishing a church was to interpret the prophets to refer to the Nazarene, and convert members of the synagogue to that fact. The addition of the Lord's Supper would transform the worship into that of a synagogue of Christ. The term "synagogue" was employed to designate Christian churches for a century, and is so used in James 2:2. And the synagogues were found in every part of the world.

No survey of any period of history can be called complete. There are so many relations and interrelations of ideas as to create a complex dependency of one factor upon another, until the pursuit of all angles seems to be infinite in scope. We must recognize the imperfections in our presentation of the background for the announcement of the rule of heaven, but if we have demonstrated even partially that all things united to produce the auspicious circumstances involved in "the fulness of the time" we shall be satisfied. And with such a background we are ready to investigate the great harbinger of the kingdom.

The Voice in the Wilderness

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Four centuries had passed without a revelation from God. The prophet Malachi had closed his declaration of "the burden of the word of the Lord" and the sacred canon, with the word "curse." Yet even in this solemn threat was found a note of hope, for the full prediction was, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord, and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse" (4:6).

Because of this promise. Rabbinic tradition and Jewish legend had gone to wild extremes. It had long been taught that the miraculous events centering about Israel's early history would be repeated with greater force in Messianic days, and in the manifestation of supernatural power, Elijah was assigned a major role. This was a favorite topic in the synagogue and a subject of frequent discussion among the lawyers and doctors. It would be irrelevant to here record the foolish and ridiculous speculations everywhere current; it will suffice for us to note that common Galilean fishermen knew that the scribes taught that Elijah must come before the Messiah could be introduced (Matt. 17:10).

The divine silence of four hundred years was finally broken. A devout, aged priest from the backwoods hill country of Judea, who belonged to the course of Abia, was chosen to officiate at the altar of incense one morning. He had never

performed this service before, nor would he ever do so again, for only once in a lifetime was any priest allowed the honor of presiding at the golden altar. One wonders about the thoughts which must have flooded the mind of the venerable priest on that October morning which brought to him the signal glory to which he had never fallen heir before. Did his heart revert to his faithful wife, also of the tribe of Levi, and to the unanswered prayers they had so frequently offered at the time of the burning of incense? Was there a deep inward pang that he had no son who would maintain the hallowed traditions belonging to Israel?

His reveries were soon broken, for while he stood at the golden altar, and the great concourse of people outside were praying, Zacharias beheld an angel standing at the right side of the altar. Instantly a sense of awe and fright overwhelmed him. But the angel spoke quickly, quieting his fears, and making the simple announcement that his prayers had been heard, that Elisabeth would bear a son, and that his name would be called Jochanan (John). Let us consider some of the characteristics of the child as divulged by the heavenly messenger.

Gabriel's Description

1. Not only would the birth of the child occasion gladness to the heart of the parents, but it would be a source of joy to many other pious souls, and the child himself would be great before the Lord.

2. John was to be a perpetual Nazirite, which would necessitate scrupulous care against ceremonial defilement. His ascetic wilderness life and refusal to engage in any social function could be attributed to this. One who was under this vow could not cut his hair, nor eat or drink any grape product (Num. 6:1-21). While most men took the Nazirite vow for a brief period, John, like Samuel and Samson, would be amenable to it for life.

3. He was to be filled with the Holy Spirit from birth. It would appear that he was like Jeremiah, in the fact that from the womb he was singled out as a prophet of God (Jer. 1:5).

4. His work was to be that of a national reformer "turning many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God." His appearance was at a time of spiritual and moral degradation. Crimes of lust were frequent. Disregard for the commandments was very pronounced. The language which was current on the streets, filled with sly references to vice, indicated disrespect for self and dignity. Men of wealth built synagogues for worship with money gained by deceit and oppression. The sectarian spirit was rife. The Jewish commonwealth must reform in preparation for the Reign of heaven.

5. John was to go before the King "in the spirit and power of Elijah." This was a concept of prophecy which none of the rabbinical leaders had caught. They were looking for Elijah to return to their land in person, and by some miraculous demonstration to ready things for the introduction of the Messiah.

6. The forerunner was "to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." This point we must never forget in our discussion of the harbinger of the Reign. It was to accomplish this task he was born, filled with the Spirit, and sent on his mission. If he made ready a prepared people, he finished the work that was given him to do; if he did not, regardless of his other accomplishments, his efforts were a failure. It will be the position of this writer that John successfully completed his work of preparation, and the material for the foundation of the temple of God was made ready in advance of the time when incorporated in that superstructure. How this work of preparation was accomplished is a matter for future discussion. Suffice it to say that the solemn pronouncement of Gabriel is sufficient to indicate the coming of a character unique in history. To this must be added that at the birth of John, his father,

suddenly filled with the Holy Spirit, uttered a memorable prophecy, augmenting that of Gabriel, and recorded in Luke 1:67-79.

Personal Habits and Character

1. After the birth of John, we learn that "he grew and became strong in the spirit." He did not grow up on city streets, nor amidst the luxury and vice of crowded metropolitan areas. "He was in the wilderness till the day of his manifestation to Israel" (Luke 1:80). During this time he had the instruction of parents who "were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless" (Luke 1:6). They would certainly lay up the words of the Lord in their heart, and teach them to the child, talking of them when sitting in the house, when walking by the way, when lying down, and when rising up (Deut. 11:19).

2. We cannot be certain at just what age John began to realize he was destined to begin a work of public proclamation. Indications are that he was about thirty years of age, and if so, he was motivated to begin the prophetic office at the same age as Ezekiel, who also was of the priestly tribe. This was the age at which the Levites "could enter the service" of the tabernacle (Num. 4:3, 23, 30, 35, etc.).

We do know that it was in the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar, during the joint high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, that "the word of the Lord came to John the Son of Zechariah in the wilderness" (Luke 3:1, 2). The public declaration was not made by John in the forums of populous cities, but rather he went into the sparsely settled region adjacent to the Jordan River. John did not go to the people, the people had to go out to John.

3. In dress, John was like the prophets of old. He was attired in "a garment of camel's hair, and a leather girdle about

his waist" (Matt. 3:4). The pious Jews, familiar with history, would immediately recall the description of Elijah, in whose spirit John came. When Ahaziah sent messengers who were intercepted by Elijah, the king said, "What kind of man was he who came to meet you and told you these things?" They answered him, "He wore a garment of haircloth, with a girdle of leather about his loins." The king said, "It is Elijah the Tishbite" (2 Kings 1:7, 8). So distinctive was this garb as the badge of prophets, that false prophets donned a hairy garment to deceive (Zech. 13:4). If those who left the cities to see and hear John, expected to find one dressed in soft raiment, they were greatly disappointed. "Behold, those who are gorgeously appareled and live in luxury, are in king's courts" (Luke 7:25).

4. The daily fare of John was as rude as his manner of life. His principal diet consisted of locusts and wild honey. The Israelites were permitted to eat four kinds of winged insects: locusts, bald locusts, crickets and grasshoppers (Lev. 11:22). These might be prepared by roasting in one of the outdoor ovens, or by frying in oil, as well as by other means. Honey was obtained from crevices in the rocks or from hollow trees, as well as occasionally from the sun-dried carcasses of animals (Cp. 1 Sam. 14:26; Judges 14:8).

5. John was regarded as possessing an anti-social attitude, and some of his critics inferred that his stern, unbending manner was the direct result of demon possession. He did not fraternize with the people, nor attend their feasts or wedding celebrations, which led Jesus to remark, "John came neither eating nor drinking, and you say 'He hath a devil.'"

Divine Highway Builder

Ancient kings, when making a journey, had the services of a forerunner. Such a trusted servant was charged with the task of preparing the route over which the monarch was to travel. It

was his responsibility to clear the track, removing stones and other obstructions, and to announce in advance the coming of the king, so the citizens would be prepared and not caught unawares by the sudden appearance of the regal retinue among them. To go before the king was a privilege highly esteemed among the oriental peoples, and although Elijah did not condone the sins of Ahab, he acted as his forerunner out of respect for his royal dignity (1 Kings 18:46).

Isaiah predicted the coming of one who, as a construction engineer, would go ahead of the Lord, making such alterations in the terrain as would be essential to the development of the "King's Highway." Here are his words. "A voice cries: 'In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low, the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain" (40:3, 4). This prediction John applied directly to himself.

His proclamation in the deserted area near the banks of the Jordan was so stirring, and the people were so aroused by it, that the Pharisees in Jerusalem sent a deputation of priests and Levites to Bethany, across the Jordan, to determine by what authority he was immersing Jews. John answered their questions by affirming he was not the Messiah. They asked if he was Elijah and again he replied in the negative. They asked if he was *that* prophet (i.e., the one of Deut. 18:15) and he denied it. They said to him then, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" He said, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as the prophet Isaiah said" (John 1:19-23).

The *wilderness* in the prophecy must certainly refer to the matted, overgrown thicket of human hearts, composing the Jewish world of the days of John. His work was to be upon the hearts of men, as evidenced by the words of Gabriel in his annunciation (Luke 1:17). The pride and arrogance which lifted

some up in their own estimation had to be overthrown and dragged down; the valleys of shortcoming and disobedience had to be filled; the crooked, devious paths and patterns of life had to be straightened out; and the rough spots of character submitted to the grading machine of God's truth.

Highway construction through a wilderness area is neither an easy nor a pleasant task. It often requires what may appear to be reckless, ruthless methods as bulldozers tear into huge trees and matted undergrowth, or shove boulders to one side. As construction engineer for the highway of God, John used effective but seemingly harsh methods. The roadway must be readied and the time for completion of his contract was very short. After quoting the words of Isaiah about the preparation of the road, Luke significantly remarks, "He said *therefore* to the multitudes that came out to be baptized by him, 'You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits that befit repentance, and do not begin to say, We have Abraham as father'" (3:7, 8). The hills of ancestral pride were blasted and toppled into the valleys below.

Highway building is very practical. Once the blueprints are finished and the construction engineer takes over, every phase of it is definite and toward a positive goal. John unhesitatingly removed rocks, uprooted obstacles and cleared away debris. When the multitude asked what fruits befitted repentance, the answer was quick and sharp, "He who has two coats, let him share with him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise." When the tax collectors asked what they must do, they were told, "Collect no more than is appointed you." When the soldiers asked what they must do, they were told, "Rob no one by violence or by false accusation, and be content with your wages."

We should never forget the true relationship of John to the Messiah and His Reign. There is a word which you will find in your unabridged dictionary which is directly applicable to John.

It is the word "pavior." In older English usage this was a common term descriptive of one who specialized in smoothing out and paving roadways. John was a "pavior"; he was not the Savior. He announced the coming of the Reign, under which he would not personally live, for he met a violent death before the coronation ceremony of the King, for whose coming he prepared the way. It was in view of this that the Messiah declared that John was "something superior to a prophet . . . Indeed, I say to you, among those that are born of women, there has not arisen a greater than John the Immerser. Yet the least in the Reign of heaven is greater than he" (Matt. 11:10, 11).

Mission, Message and Method

We propose a series of questions and answers relating to the work of John, son of Zacharias, by which it is hoped we may fully inform the reader of the importance of the labors of this harbinger.

1. *What was the general purpose of John?* **"Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, who shall prepare the way before thee" (Matt. 11:10).**

2. *How was this to be accomplished?* **"You will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their sins" (Luke 1:76, 77).**

3. *How did he begin his work?* **"In those days came John the Immerser, proclaiming in the wilderness" (Matt. 3:1). "With many other exhortations, he proclaimed good news to the people" (Luke 3:18).**

4. *Did he command his hearers to believe in Jesus?* **"John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus" (Acts 19:4).**

5. *Did he demand repentance?* **"Repent, for the Reign of heaven is approaching" (Matt. 3:2).**

6. *What confession was made?* **"Then went out to him Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan . . . confessing their sins" (Matt. 3:5, 6).**

7. *In what did John immerse the penitents?* **"I baptize you with water" (Matt. 3:11). "They were baptized by him in the river Jordan" (Matt. 3:6).**

8. *What was the design of the immersion?* **"John the Immerser appeared in the wilderness proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins" (Mark 1:4).**

9. *Did all of the people prepared for the Lord receive him?* **"He came unto his own, and his own received him not" (John 1:11).**

10. *What of those who did receive him?* **"To all who received him, who believed in his name, to them he gave the privilege to become children of God; who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:11, 12).**

The material for the temple of God, like that for the temple of Solomon, was prepared in advance, so it could be builded into the structure immediately. John proclaimed the good news that the Reign was approaching, and prepared men in anticipation for it. Many of those who later followed Jesus were first disciples of John, but left him to follow Jesus. Among these were the apostles. "The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples; and he looked at Jesus as he walked, and said, 'Behold the lamb of God!' The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus . . . One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Jesus, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his brother Simon, and said to him, 'We have found the Messiah'" (John 1:35-41).

These men were Jews, and as such they had been born of blood, of the will of the flesh and the will of man. But by their acceptance of the good news of the Reign they were born of God. However, they were children by anticipation, since the family association under the authority of the Messiah could not be set up until the coronation. Only those who received him, believing on his name, were granted the privilege of becoming children of God, and with his accession to the throne were adopted into the family upon the basis of their previous birth. Certainly they did not need to be immersed again. They were prepared stones!

In order to establish a nation in a moment, or to bring a kingdom into existence in one day, it is necessary that preliminary preparation be made to have material to incorporate in it. This was true of Zion, the kingdom of the Messiah. "Before she was in labor she gave birth; before her pain came upon her she was delivered of a son. Who has heard such things? Shall a land be born in one day? Shall a nation be brought forth in a moment? For as soon as Zion was in labor she brought forth her sons" (Isaiah 66:7, 8).

Normal functions require birth pangs to produce children from the uterus. But Zion produced offspring both before and after travail. Before the regular order was established she was delivered of a son; then, as soon as the regular order was established, she brought forth sons in normal procedure. No one had ever before heard or seen such things, according to the prophet, who hastens to explain that the reason for the production of offspring in advance of the regular order was to make it possible for a nation or kingdom to be established in one day, even in a moment.

Parable of the Sheepfold

A consideration of the foregoing will serve to explain the parable of Jesus in John 10:1-6. "Truly, truly, I say to you, he

who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber; but he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the gatekeeper opens; the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and his sheep follow him, for they know his voice. A stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers."

The expression relative to those who do not enter by the door but climb in by some other manner, has no application to the entrance of the sheep into the fold, but to those who pretended to be shepherds in order to steal, kill and destroy. The fold is the Jewish economy, and there were many false Messiahs who sought to establish themselves, only to lead the people into acts of violence and death. Jesus says, "All who came before me are thieves and robbers" (verse 8).

The door is that of prophecy, and it was so constructed that only one person could ever enter it, the true Messiah, the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper was John, who opened the way for entrance. When Jesus entered the Jewish fold, he called his own sheep (those who were a people made ready, prepared for the Lord) and led them out of the Jewish fold to create a new flock. "And I have other sheep (Gentiles) which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will heed my voice. So there shall be one flock, one shepherd" (verse 16).

The Baptism of John

When Jesus was teaching on the temple portico, he was accosted by the chief priests and seniors of the people, who demanded, "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?" He replied, "I also will ask you a question: and if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John,

whence was it? From heaven or from men?" (Matt. 21:23-25). The reluctance of those querists to answer this question, is equalled only by the ignorance of it in these days. It will be profitable to our purpose to consider the baptism of John.

1. It was valid only to prepare men in advance of the commencement of the Reign.

2. It was performed under the theocracy and was authorized by God. "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John" (John 1:6). "He (God) . . . sent me to baptize with water" (John 1:33).

3. It was not performed in the name of Jesus the Christ, for the simple reason that he did not yet have any authority. "Hitherto you have asked nothing in my name" (John 16:24).

4. When all authority in heaven and earth was bestowed upon the Christ, and God put all things in subjection under his feet, the baptism of John could no longer be performed validly. Those who had been baptized with that baptism, prior to the coronation of the King were not required to be baptized again, but from henceforth it was not valid for others, because it was not performed under the authority of the regnant monarch, the Messiah. Since his coronation, no act of a religious nature is valid, unless performed in his name, i.e., by his authority (Col. 3:17).

Unfortunately, in remote areas, some who had learned of John's baptism, did not learn of the coronation of the Christ, so continued to proclaim the baptism of John. Of this number was Apollos, the Alexandrian Jew, who had to be brought up to date on events by Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:24-26).

When Paul arrived in Ephesus he found certain disciples who informed him they had been baptized unto John's baptism. Pointing out to them that this baptism was valid only to those looking forward to Christ, those who heard this were baptized in

the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts 19:1-5). This baptism was in the same form and the same element as that of John. The difference was that it was administered under the authority of the reigning King.

John did not fail in his heaven-sent mission. He accomplished what God sent him to do. He produced a reformation in the hearts of many, and he baptized those who confessed their sins, for the forgiveness of those sins. Thus he prepared a people made ready for the Lord, who needed only to acknowledge that Jesus was the Messiah, to be incorporated into the household of God. When the sword of the executioner in the prison fortress of Machaerus, severed the head of John from his body, the "pavior" of the Messiah could die secure in the conviction that he had finished his task on earth.

The Ministry of the Master

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The work of preparing for the coming Reign did not cease with the murder of John. Jesus had personally begun proclaiming the same message immediately after his baptism (Matt. 4:17). He later commissioned twelve envoys who were sent out with the instruction, "Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And preach as you go, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand'" (Matt. 10:5-7). A short time later, he appointed seventy others, and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to come. These were instructed to say "The kingdom of God has come near you" (Luke 10:9). It is evident that there was no lack of public attestation to the forthcoming Reign.

In preparation for the approaching Reign it was necessary that Jesus describe its nature, character and relationships, although his teaching was as little understood by his hearers as by many who read his words in these days. Varying phases of the subject were introduced as opportunity afforded a chance to illustrate its peculiarities, and a lack of attention to the background of the instruction has created much confusion. Illustrative of this are the conflicting views as to when the Reign began. As to this matter, it would seem that certain facts are incontestable.

1. The Reign did not begin during the lifetime of John, the forerunner, for after his decease, eighty-three persons, one of

them being the Son of God himself, traveled up and down the land proclaiming that it was drawing nigh.

2. It had not yet come when Peter made his noble confession of the Messiahship and Sonship of Jesus, for it was after this that Jesus declared, "Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste of death before they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom" (Matt. 16:28).

3. It had not come at the time of the last supper, the night before Jesus died, for he then said with reference to the fruit of the vine, "Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I tell you that from now on I shall not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes" (Luke 22:18).

4. It had not come at the resurrection of Jesus, for it was subsequent to that event, when the selected envoys asked, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" which demonstrates that not only had it not arrived, but the very ambassadors did not yet comprehend its nature.

5. It could not begin until Jesus left the earth, for he had to leave his servants and go to a far country (heaven) to receive kingly power (Luke 19:12). It was when he came with the clouds of heaven to the Ancient of Days, and was presented before him, that there was given him dominion, glory, and a kingdom (Daniel 7:13, 14).

But this leaves unresolved some difficulties created by the language of Jesus during the period when he was preparing men for the coming Reign. We must harmonize those passages with the facts above stated.

"The law and the prophets were until John; since then the kingdom of God is preached, and every one enters it violently" (Luke 16:16). "Jesus said to them, 'Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you'" (Matt. 21:31). It is asked how persons can enter a kingdom

which is not yet existent.

It must be remembered that the kingdom of heaven is built upon certain principles. These principles were enunciated and explained prior to the introduction of the new regime and in preparation for its coming. And while the kingdom was established in one day, it was only after much indoctrination of the basic truths. Those who previously grasped the principles and comprehended the significant reformation these principles were to work in the life of each individual, were spoken of as pressing into the kingdom. Words may have both a literal and figurative meaning.

The chief priests and elders of the Jews had just questioned the authority of Jesus. In reply, Jesus said, "Truly, I say unto you, the tax collectors and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the harlots believed him; and even when you saw it, you did not afterward repent and believe him." "Going into the kingdom" as used here simply meant to believe in the testimony of John that the Reign was approaching, and to make such amendment of life as was compatible with the information. Such persons as did this were entering the kingdom in prospect.

The scribes and lawyers, by their traditions and opinions, not only made void the law, but confused men and women, until the principles of truth were made obscure. Thus they "shut the kingdom of heaven against men" by their interpretations and endless wranglings, for they neither entered themselves (by acceptance of the truth concerning the Messiah) nor allowed others who would enter to go in (Matt. 23:13). The people generally had to depend for knowledge upon what their leaders taught them. The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat (Matt. 23:1). This instruction was based on the law and the prophets. Until John came, the law and the prophets were thus said to be the instructors, but when John came, he declared the

approaching Reign of heaven, with such effect that men and women, fervently, excitedly, and anxiously pressed to enter the new relationship, as those who would crush violently against the gates of a city to gain admission. The announcement of a Reign in which all might participate aroused a feeling among the Jewish people such as had not been known through centuries of oppression. "When the people saw the sign which he (Jesus) had done, they said, 'This is indeed the prophet which is to come into the world . . . ' they were about to come and take him by force to make him king" (John 6:14, 15).

When Jesus once healed a blind and dumb demoniac, the people, stricken with amazement, acclaimed him as the son of David. But the Pharisees, incensed by this public acknowledgement of him, scoffingly remarked that it was only by Beelzebul, chief prince of the demons, that he worked such miracles. In refutation of their accusation, Jesus filed the following logical objections.

1. This would mean division in the realm of the demons, and would result in the downfall of Satan's kingdom, if Satan was engaged in the task of throwing out his own agents.

2. The superiority of Jesus over Satan would be demonstrated, for no strong man would allow another to enter in and throw out his goods, unless he first overcame, subdued and bound the owner.

3. The fact that others among their own number were exorcists, and they acknowledged their ability to rid men of demons militated against their charge that it was by the prince of demons.

On the other hand, Jesus argued that if he acted by the Spirit of God, the kingdom of God had come upon them. This simply meant that such manifestations of power were of the nature which the prophets had predicted would accompany the

kingdom of heaven. Isaiah had painted a preview of the Messiah with the Spirit of the Lord God upon him, because the Lord had anointed him to proclaim liberty to the captives (Isa. 61:1). If, by the Spirit of God, the demoniac captives were freed, it would be a proof that the age of the Messianic Reign was upon them. That the Reign had not yet actually come is evident from the fact that the Pharisees later on asked when the kingdom was coming (Luke 17:20).

Some are confused by the reply given on this occasion, for Jesus answered them, "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; nor will they say, 'Lo, here it is!' or 'There!' for behold, the kingdom of God is within you."

This did not imply that the kingdom had already come. The point of consideration in the reply of Jesus was the nature of the kingdom. The Pharisees thought they would be able to see its coming as men saw the occupation of territory by the Roman legions. But the kingdom of heaven would not be accompanied with clash of arms, fanfare of trumpets, marching troops, or political upheaval. Nor would men point to this city or that as the seat of the government or the center of authority. The realm of the authority would be the hearts of men; the overthrow accomplished would be that of the sinful dispositions of men.

The Reign of heaven was approaching men, but those who grasped the fundamental elements of that Reign, were spoken of as drawing near to it. A certain scribe, having listened to Jesus as he refuted and routed a number of taunting critics, perceiving the justness of his reply, came to him, and proposed the question as to which commandment was chief of all. Jesus answered, "The chief of all the commandments is, 'Hearken, Israel, the Lord is our God. The Lord is one,' and 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment. The second resembles it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no greater commandment than

these." The scribe admitted the answer was an excellent one, and declared that the commandments recited by Jesus represented more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices. "Jesus, observing how pertinently he had answered said to him, 'You are not far from the kingdom of God'" (Mark 12:28-34).

Terms of Entrance

It was essential for Jesus, during his earthly ministry, to define the terms of entrance into the kingdom and to describe the character of those who would be deemed worthy of citizenship therein. The necessity for this will be easily recognized when one remembers the mistaken ideas on the subject in the minds of his hearers. There was constantly a spirit of political ambition to combat and thwart. The disciples, laboring under the prevailing Jewish misconception as to the nature of the kingdom, and motivated by selfish impulse, disputed among themselves as to who among them would occupy the chief administrative offices in the coming regime.

Upon one such occasion Jesus took the opportunity afforded to teach a lesson relative to the nature of the kingdom. This he did by the use of an object lesson which demonstrated his ability as an instructor. Jesus believed in the use of visual aids to enforce spiritual truths. He suddenly called a little child unto him and placed the lad in the midst of the disciples. It is interesting to note that ancient tradition identifies the child as Ignatius, who became one of the most noted fathers of the early church. Regardless of identity, the child was docilely compliant with the request of Jesus and came quickly and meekly.

Jesus said, "Except you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:3). One interesting phase of the dispute lies in the fact that this occurred after Jesus had promised the keys of the kingdom unto Peter, and the argument over primacy demonstrates

conclusively that Peter did not consider it had been resolved in his favor. Now the disciples are informed that even entrance into the kingdom will demand a complete turning, a reversal of attitude. Worldly ambition is not a key to power, but a bar to the gate. The renunciation of the disposition to seek prestige and pre-eminence is essential to admission.

A little child, wholly dependent upon others, truthful, obedient, and without political ambition, represents the ideal for which citizens of the kingdom must strive. What a rebuke to pride, pomp and power. The recapture of that innocence, freedom from passion and strife, and sense of dependency, which characterized us in the first bloom of childhood should constitute our chief aim in life. We go forward by going backward! We gain by putting off; we win by divesting ourselves of that which we have accumulated. It is regrettable that many accumulate years and become *childish,* when the teaching of Jesus is that we should turn back and become child-like. "Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

From the discourse familiarly called "The Sermon on the Mount" we learn several facts bearing upon the nature of the kingdom and the character of its citizenry. In a memorable passage, in which Jesus distinguishes between true Judaism and the degenerate form of it taught by the scribes and Pharisees, he shows that his task is the fulfillment of the first and the abrogation of the last. One can almost sense the questions passing back and forth among those who composed the huge gathering at the mount. How does this Nazarene propose to accomplish his task? Will he publicly denounce the prophets and declare them of no value? Will he destroy Moses and himself assume the place of the Torah? Will he inaugurate a kingdom with himself upon the throne, dispensing the wisdom of God directly to all who enquire?

Jesus was not unaware of the thoughts which perplexed his

auditors. "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy but to fulfill" (Matt. 5:17). Here is an intimation that the law and the prophets were to be consummated by a person superior to both. Contrary to the reasoning of the Jews, the Torah was not the end in itself, but the means to an end. It was a child-conductor to lead to Christ and could never fulfill its highest mission until it delivered those in its charge unto him.

Jesus continues: "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law until all be fulfilled." Instead of showing a spirit of disrespect for the Torah and the prophets, he emphasizes that the minutest portions of it are of great worth in the divine arrangement. This was a contrast with the scribes who divided the precepts into various classes, some of which were considered binding, but others of which might be disregarded. The jot was the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet, the *yod.* The tittle was a small point by which similar letters were distinguished from each other. In this case they are used figuratively to indicate that the slightest principle of divine law would not fail of accomplishment in the eternal purpose.

"Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." The context shows that Jesus is talking about the commandments in the law and the prophets. It is not to be understood that these will constitute the code in the kingdom of heaven. But they were given by the authority of God, and to wilfully violate one commandment constitutes a definite insult to the majesty of heaven, and to actually teach men to do this is a flagrant sin. Greatness in the kingdom is predicated upon a proper attitude toward God and his word.

"For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in

no case enter the kingdom of heaven." The scribes were devoted to the work of reading and studying the law and were the recognized expounders of it. The Pharisees were punctilious in observance of the letter of the law. Both groups often overlooked the spirit of the law in their interminable arguments about the details of it. This is best illustrated by the indictment, "Alas for you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you pay tithe on mint, dill, and cumin, while you have neglected the weightier requirements of the Law— just judgment, mercy and faithful dealing . . . You blind guides, straining out the gnat while you gulp down the camel!" (Matt. 23:23, 24. Weymouth).

When Jesus spoke of entrance into the kingdom demanding a righteousness exceeding that of the scribes and Pharisees, he was not talking of the hypocrites among them. The thought is that "Unless your concept of righteousness is of a higher nature than that attained by scribes and Pharisees, admission to the kingdom of heaven cannot be secured." What a lesson for those who would degenerate kingdom life into an endless series of squabbles over incidentals while wholly ignoring the spirit or essence of truth.

In this same address, Jesus, speaking about the time of final separation declared, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 7:21). Assuredly this has reference to the kingdom in its final phase, but is there not here also a basis or condition of admission into the kingdom over which the Messiah rules? Can one come into such a sacred relationship except upon the obedience to the Father's will?

Our review of the teaching of the Christ would not be complete if we ignored his statements occasioned by the query of a certain wealthy young ruler, who came running to kneel before Jesus. This young man desired to know what good thing he might do in order to secure eternal life. He was informed that if

he would enter into life, he must keep the commandments. This no doubt was disappointing, for it was probable that he expected a new formula or panacea for the ills of the world, and as a key to the mysteries of life. To be pointed to the commandments which he had memorized and observed from his youth was altogether too commonplace. He no doubt had a sense of emptiness and futility, a hunger which was not satisfied. In order to fill his heart with assurance he seeks for that secret which will bring him hope. "What lack I yet?"

Mark records that Jesus looked at him and loved him. There could now be no compromise, a soul was in the balance, and the test must be faced. Jesus said, "One thing is lacking in you: go, sell all you possess and give the proceeds to the poor, and you shall have riches in heaven; and come and be a follower of mine." This may seem a harsh requirement and a hard demand. Yet, in a sense, it is made of all of us. We do not hesitate to make a general application of the words "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth . . . but rather lay up treasures in heaven . . . for where a man's treasure is, there will his heart be also." The only difference in the two statements is that one proposes a test for him who is in the process of laying up treasure, while this has to do with one who already has it accumulated. The faith required to divest one's self of amassed wealth to have treasure in heaven, is equal to that required to keep from amassing wealth for the same reason. Neither will succeed if there is a tendency to trust in wealth as an evidence of security.

It required this to bring the young man face to face with himself. It was revealed that money in the bank meant more than treasure in heaven, that before he would sell what he already possessed, he would forfeit all hope of eternal life. This served to demonstrate how vain was his boast that he had kept the law inviolate from his youth. He would likely have violated every command in the Decalogue to have preserved his fortune, thus he had not really kept the law at all, because his heart was

not right. He had kept his eye on the commandments and his heart on his bank statement. The emptiness which drove him to Jesus was lack of real spiritual motive. The end of his visit is a sad record. "At these words his brow darkened, and he went away sad; for he was possessed of great wealth."

When the young ruler departed, Jesus said to the disciples, "I solemnly tell you that it is with difficulty that a rich man will enter the Kingdom of the Heavens. I repeat it to you: it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God." (Matt. 19:23, 24. Weymouth). The apostles were dumbfounded at this and asked, "Who then can be saved?" To this Jesus replied, "With men this is impossible, but with God everything is possible." This can only be understood in the light of conditions in that day.

The disciples were generally poor, humble men, who had been accustomed to hardships and toil. They beheld the wealthy and opulent class, living in luxury, and basking in the prestige which was theirs. It appeared that they could have anything they desired. If those who had all the privileges and conveniences of life could not attain the goal, it appeared there would be no hope for the poverty-stricken masses. But the words of Jesus demonstrated that God could accomplish what man could not dream of doing. The kingdom of heaven does not depend upon earthly wealth or power for survival. Citizenship therein is secured by turning to child-like humility, by adoption of a high standard of righteousness, and by obedience to the Father's will.

The teaching of Jesus relative to the kingdom is like a diamond of many facets, sparkling and scintillating with different flashes as the light reflects upon it. One cannot begin to grasp its fulness by consideration of one or two aspects. This is evident when we recall that sometimes the kingdom is referred to as something which can be wrested from its citizens and given to others, sometimes it is portrayed as a state or condition; again it is depicted as an inheritance. The diversity is well illustrated

by the variety of parables given. "He told them many things in parables." (Matt. 13:3).

Purpose of Parables

It is a common belief that Jesus spoke in parables so that his listeners could grasp the great truths he expressed. It is often said that his auditors were generally ignorant and unlearned, so that he was forced to employ illustrations in order for them to learn about heavenly things. We believe that a careful study will show the exact opposite to be the case. During the personal ministry of Jesus, it was not yet time for men to understand the great truths of the kingdom. By couching his lessons in such figurative language, the secrets of the kingdom were maintained, and yet a basis for unravelling those secrets at a later period was provided. It was for this reason that the parables spoken to the multitude were privately explained to the apostles.

After relating the parable of the sower, "The disciples proceeded to ask him what the parable meant. 'To you,' He replied, 'it is granted to know the secrets of the Kingdom of God; but all others are taught by parables, in order that they may see and yet not see, and may hear and yet not understand'" (Luke 8:9, 10. Weymouth). Matthew records the event thus, "And His disciples came and asked Him, 'Why do you speak to them in figurative language?' He replied, 'Because while to you it is granted to know the secrets of the Kingdom of the Heavens, to them it is not . . . I speak to them in figurative language for this reason, that while looking they do not see, and while hearing, they neither hear nor understand . . . To you then I will explain the parable of the Sower'" (13:10-18). The multitude who heard Jesus did not understand the kingdom by considering the parables; instead, we understand the parables by considering the kingdom.

There are exceptions to all rules, and while the above was

generally true, there were a few notable cases which did not conform to the pattern. One of these concerned the wicked vine-dressers. The parable depicted a householder who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, hewed out a vine-vat in it, and built a strong lodge in its midst. He then left it in the hands of vine-dressers and traveled abroad. One cannot help but see the similarity between this parable and the one recounted in Isaiah 5. The vineyard represented God's people planted as choice vines in the promised land, the fence was the law which restrained them and kept out alien influences. The winepress indicated God's expectation of fruitfulness, while the watchman's tower or keeper's lodge shows the protective care manifested toward God's chosen ones.

The vine-dressers were the leaders of the people, the priests, scribes and Pharisees. As the teachers and instructors, they were to fertilize the hearts of men by proper doctrine, prune out the dead wood of indifference and neglect, and exercise a continuous watchful regard. The vineyard was leased to them and they were expected to produce fruit as payment for the stewardship intrusted to them.

Just as it is in the realm of horticulture, so it is in the history of nations. There is a time when fruit is to be expected and the cultivation and effort bestowed should pay dividends. Accordingly, "when vintage time approached, he sent his servants to the vine-dressers to receive his grapes; but the vine-dressers seized the servants, and one they cruelly beat, one they killed, one they pelted with stones." This indicates that God expected the grapes of justice and righteousness from Israel (Isa. 5:7) long before the advent of the Messiah. The servants dispatched to collect his dues were the prophets, but the cruel and vindictive leaders of the people entreated these heavenly envoys in a shameful fashion, even putting some of them to death.

The persistence of God in attempting corrective measures,

his longsuffering extended in hope of repentance, his forbearance in the face of insult, all of these are illustrated in the statement regarding the householder, "Again he sent another party of servants more numerous than the first," but the futility of the effort is seen in the result, "And them they treated in the same manner." The word of God through Jeremiah is appropriate at this point. "I have sent to you all my servants the prophets, sending them persistently, saying, 'Turn now every one of you from his evil way, and amend your doings, and do not go after other gods to serve them, and then you shall dwell in the land which I gave to you and your fathers.' But you did not incline your ear or listen to me." (35:15)

"Later still he sent to them his son, saying, 'They will respect my son.' But the vine-dressers when they saw the son, said one to another, 'Here comes the heir: come let us kill him and get his inheritance.' So they seized him, dragged him out of the vineyard and killed him." This constituted the crowning act of disrespect for the right and majesty of heaven, as evidenced by Jesus in his indictment of that generation. "You witness against your selves, that you are the sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then the measure of your fathers" (Matt. 23:31, 32). What was lacking in the completion of the persecution of servants was made up in the murder of the Son.

The first portion of this parable was history, the part we are now considering was prophecy. It is pregnant with meaning. Note that the vine-dressers, representing the leaders of Judaism, admit among themselves that the son is the heir and entitled to the patrimony. They do not plot his death because of mistaken identity, but because they recognize him. The plot to kill the son is an exact picture of what transpired. "From that day forward they planned and schemed in order to put him to death" (John 11:53). The very expressions are significant of the manner of his betrayal— *seized, dragged, killed.*

Of outstanding importance is the reason assigned by the

vine-dressers for killing the son. "Let us kill him and get his inheritance." The hierarchy of Israel determined to keep the divine bounty for physical Israel. They believed that by getting the son out of the way, they could rule over God's people, and keep earthly control over the theocracy. By this means they could keep the favor of Rome and continue as a political power. "The high priests and Pharisees therefore held a meeting of the Sanhedrin. 'What steps are we taking?' they asked one another; 'for that man is performing a great number of miracles. If we leave him alone in this way, everybody will believe in him, and the Romans will come and blot out both our city and our nation'" (John 11:47, 48). Little did they realize that their rejection of the Son would produce the very catastrophe they sought to avert.

In the account of Matthew, the priests and Pharisees are led to pronounce their own sentence and express their own fate. The question is asked, "When the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to the vine-dressers?" The answer was, "He will put the wretches to a wretched death, and will entrust the vineyard to other vine-dressers who will render the produce to him at the vintage season." This pronouncement of the just deserts of the Jewish commonwealth by its own leaders will exonerate God from any charge of injustice to the nation. The destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. by the forces of Titus was merely the execution of this self-imposed sentence. Our Lord concludes, "That, I tell you, is the reason why the Kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and given to a nation which will produce the fruits thereof." Spiritual Israel will accomplish that in which physical Israel failed.

The record says, "After listening to his parables, the high priest and the Pharisees perceived that he was speaking about them; but though they were eager to lay hands upon him, they were afraid of the people, for by them he was regarded as a prophet" (Matt. 21:45, 46). The fact that the leaders of Jewish thought understood that Jesus was speaking about them makes

their subsequent act in killing the Son all the more heinous. The parable itself should have been a warning, but was not regarded as such. Instead, it seemed only to have increased resentment as truth often does in the hearts of those who thus prove themselves unworthy.

Our present purpose is not to present a book on the parables, even though many of these illustrate vital features about the kingdom. Space will not permit an analysis of them all. The extensive growth of the kingdom is illustrated by the mustard-seed; the intensive growth by the leaven in dough; the accidental discovery of truth by some is portrayed by the treasure hidden in a field; the discovery as a result of long and eager search is depicted in the finding of the pearl of great price. The universality of it is found in the parable of the net cast into the waters of the sea; the final purging and separation, in the story of the tares.

Thus did the heir to the throne lay the foundation of his rule by mixing and mingling with his future subjects. Like a prince who forsakes the palace to dwell in the slums, that he may understand the problems of those who compose his realm, so did Jesus live with the poor of this world that he might convince them of a sympathetic heart and an attentive ear in their times of suffering and distress. This was genuine preparation for the kingdom.

From the Cross to the Crown

Contents

The earthly sojourn of our Lord was bounded by a recognition of his kingly estate. At his advent into the world, the Magi from the Eastern nations sought him out to present gold, frankincense and myrrh, traditional offerings bestowed upon monarchs. Their question upon arrival in Jerusalem, "Where is he that is born king of the Jews?" threw Herod and the entire city into a state of consternation. The cross upon which he died bore the, inscription, "This is Jesus the king of the Jews." Thus he entered the world and left it with testimony from others of his regal power. But the foreign astrologers and the Roman procurator were not the only ones who attested to the fact.

Early in his personal ministry, Jesus called Philip to follow him. Philip, in turn, located Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him of whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" Nathanael asked, "How do you know me?" This seems to imply more than mere personal recognition. Nathanael sensed that Jesus could read and discern his heart, which was pure and sincere. Jesus answered him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." A. B. Bruce, in his *Training of the Twelve,* may be correct in the statement, "He was a man much addicted to the habits of devotion: he had been engaged in spiritual exercises under cover of a fig tree before he met with Jesus." In any event, Nathanael,

being surprised at such prescience, burst out with, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" Jesus called Nathanael a true Israelite; Nathanael recognized him as the true King.

At the beginning of the week of his crucifixion, Jesus was given special honor by a large crowd. Those who had been present at the raising of Lazarus had given ample testimony of this notable feat, so that, when it was noised abroad that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, a great crowd went out to meet him. In preparation for this entrance Jesus had previously dispatched two of his disciples to an adjacent village, to secure an ass which they found tied, with her colt standing by. The ass and foal were brought and the disciples placed their garments upon the animals as a saddle. Riding upon these lowly domestic beasts, Jesus was met by a huge throng, and when they saw him, a great cry was raised, "Hosanna! Blessed be he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!"

The excitement of the occasion swelled and grew. Some cast their garments down, others bestrewed the road with palm branches, making a royal pathway of triumph. As Jesus rode along with the multitude pressing about him, and their cheers and salutes rending the air, the carping Pharisees said to one another, "You see that you can do nothing; look, the world has gone after him" (John 12:19). It is sad to recall that he who entered the city acclaimed as a king would be taken outside of it to be crucified in less than a week.

But the death of Jesus was essential to his kingship. This was an anomaly not appreciated by the Jewish leaders of his day. Yet a careful study of God's revelation must convince the eager student that in no other way could he become heir to the throne.

1. It is evident that the kingdom of God was invested in the Jewish economy prior to the death of Jesus. So long as the first

covenant was effective it acted as a middle wall of partition, making impossible the achievement of God's ultimate purpose which was "a plan for the fulness of time to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth" (Eph. 1:10). The covenant was not to be destroyed but fulfilled, which required that its sacrifices reach their goal in the one great sacrifice to which they pointed. "For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified" (Heb. 10:14). "Having canceled the bond which stood against us with its legal demands; this he set aside, nailing it to the cross" (Col. 2:14). The kingdom of the Messiah must have as a foundation promises superior to those under the first covenant. "Christ has obtained a ministry which is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since, it is enacted on better promises" (Heb. 8:6). For this reason "He abolishes the first in order to establish the second" (Heb. 10:9).

2. The kingdom of the Messiah was to be essentially one of peace. "Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end" (Isa. 9:7). "And I will make with you an everlasting covenant . . . for you shall go out in joy, and be led forth in peace" (Isa. 55:12). "I will make your overseers peace and your taskmasters righteousness" (Isa. 60:17). Since there can be no real peace among men until they are at peace with God, the prime objective was not to pacify those who would be the subjects of the kingdom, but to restore a proper relationship of all to God. Peace on earth can only come from peace in heaven. But peace can never rule in a heart that is filled with a guilt complex. Therefore, justification is required before a guilty sinner can be at peace.

Every sin must carry with it a penalty, and there must either be expiation or the guilty must pay the penalty. "Since all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, they are justified by his grace, as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as an expiation by his blood, to be received by faith" (Rom. 3:24, 25). "Jesus our Lord

was put to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification" (Rom. 4:25) "Therefore since we are justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1).

The cross of Christ is the rallying point for every soul blighted by sin. As men draw near to it they draw closer to each other. Peace is destroyed by selfishness and pride. The cross is a monument to the greatest act of unselfish devotion the world has ever seen. Here the pure died for the impure, the just for the unjust, the sinless for the sinner, the godly for the ungodly. No man can exalt himself at the cross where Jesus humbled himself and became obedient unto death. Upon that tree the Shepherd died for the sheep, the King for his subjects, the Captain for his soldiers, and the Master for his slaves. No wonder that those who were once segregated by hatred extend hands of peace to each other.

"Now in Christ you who once were far off have been brought near in the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility . . . and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby bringing the hostility to an end. And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to you who were near; for through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father" (Eph. 2:13-18). Hostility is ended, reconciliation is accomplished, and nearness achieved, through the cross. In Christ there was no divided purpose; in him our own hearts merge and flow together. Mutual access to the Father means mutual success in winning peace.

3. The citizens of the kingdom were to be those who were ransomed or redeemed. The price of redemption was the blood of him whose loyal subjects they were to be. Thus their obedience would be prompted by love. "The Son of man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life. a ransom for many" (Mt. 20:28). "For there is one God, and there is one

mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all" (1 Tim. 2:5, 6). "Who gave himself for us to redeem us from all iniquity and to purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds" (Titus 2:14). "You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your fathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot" (1 Pet. 1:18, 19).

A consideration of these factors cements together those who acknowledge the sovereignty of the Messiah. All were enslaved, all were captives of sin, all stood equally in need of redemption. In this particular no one in the kingdom has any ground for pride or arrogance. The universal recognition of helplessness and dependency, the sense, of his overwhelming and abiding love, these work together for the glory of God and our own unity as kindred spirits. Only an event of supreme importance could achieve this result. Such an event was the death of the Messiah. "For the love of Christ controls us, because we are convinced that one has died for all, therefore all have died. And he died for all, that those who live might live no longer for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised" (2 Cor. 5:14, 15).

4. The great enemy of souls is "the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the Devil and Satan" (Rev. 20:2). As the opposer of all that is good, he seeks to thwart the purpose of God with reference to the kingdom. The great struggle is described as war upon the battlements of heaven. "Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they were defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world— he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, 'Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the

authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down'" (Rev. 12:7-10).

It was fitting that as a prelude to his reign, the Son of God, should grapple with the arch-fiend of the ages, and do so upon his own territory, that of death. If, after he was "crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men," motivated by Satan, he could be kept imprisoned by the bonds of death, the purpose of God would be forever frustrated. On the other hand, if Jesus willingly submitted to death and could not be held by its bonds, the power of Satan would be broken. "Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same nature, that through death he might destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifetime bondage" (Heb. 2:14, 15).

No other man could make this test, for all were doomed to death by virtue of their own sin. In every one of them the ruler of this world had fastened the venomed sting of sin whose end is death. Only Jesus could say, "The ruler of this world is coming. He has no power over me" (John 14:30). He owed nothing to death, and thus he could voluntarily surrender his life as the supreme test of power over Satan. "I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again; this charge I have received from my Father" (John 10:18). Death could not retain him. "But God raised him up, having loosed the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it" (Acts 2:24).

In triumph, Jesus could say, "I am the living one; I died, and behold I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades" (Rev. 1:18). Thus it is affirmed that he "abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Tim. 1:10). The grapple with Satan in the realm of death, and the successful overthrow of his dominion, brings renewed hope to every soul of man, and points to final victory.

Jesus was but the first-fruits of a great harvest. "But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep . . . For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ (1 Cor. 15:20-23).

The removal of the first covenant, the establishment of peace, the ransom of souls to provide a basis of love, the conquest of Satan and the overthrow of his great enslaving force, all of these required the death of the Messiah. This is far from being a complete list of reasons assigned for this momentous event, and to enumerate the blessings accruing therefrom would be to run the entire gamut of God's marvelous provision. But those we have mentioned are directly related to his right to rule as king and to have all authority bestowed upon him.

Jesus and Pontius Pilate

Daniel predicted the rise of four great universal empires. In the last of these, God was to set up a kingdom which would never be destroyed, but which was to break in pieces and destroy all of these kingdoms. When Jesus was arrested, after the betrayal by Judas Iscariot, he was taken before Pontius Pilate. Thus the king of the heavenly commonwealth was brought face to face with the representative of the fourth world power. Never did two more diverse personalities confront each other.

Pilate was the sixth Roman Procurator of Judea. He succeeded Valerius Gratus, and held the office, for ten years. He was a corrupt politician, devoid of high principle, and motivated by a love for power and a lust for distinction. Avaricious and greedy, he fell readily into temptation, and pursued such policies as promoted his personal ambition. In his dealings with the Jews he was tyrannical and despotic, cruel and murderous. He was a demonstration of foreign power at its worst level.

It was to this man Jesus was taken early on that day which was to be the day of his death. He had already been subjected to questioning by Annas, who then sent him bound to Joseph Caiaphas, his son-in-law and the high priest recognized by the Romans. When the Jews reached the Praetorium where the governor lived, they would not enter, fearing ceremonial defilement which would render them unclean and unable to eat the passover. Accordingly, Pilate went out to the mob, and demanded to know what legal accusation they filed against their bound prisoner. The Jews replied with some insolence that if the man had not been an evil-doer, they would not have handed him over.

Pilate, not wishing to become involved in another of the prolonged disputes which generally terminated in a wrangle, told them to take him and judge him by their own law. The Jewish leaders, showing they were already determined on his fate, reminded Pilate that under Roman jurisdiction, the right to assess the death penalty had been taken from them, and they could not lawfully carry out a sentence of capital punishment.

Pilate retired into the Praetorium, and summoned Jesus to him. His first question was directly to the point, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus asked him if the question was based upon his own observation, or if it were merely a report which he had heard from others. The procurator thus had to face the issue, as to whether he had seen any seditious moves upon the part of Jesus, which would endanger the Roman authority, or tend to pose a threat against the occupational forces. If not, he ought to be careful about being influenced by malicious reports of those who were ever on the alert to create difficulty for the Roman garrisons.

This moved Pilate to ask, "Am I a Jew?" This was said to offset the idea that he might be motivated by any Jewish prejudices. Being a Roman he would not be inclined to partiality toward one group or another among the Jews, and thus he

implied he was capable of deciding the matter relative to the accusation lodged against Jesus upon the merits of the case. Subsequent events demonstrate that this was not true, for political ambition and personal security caused him to allow an innocent man to be killed.

Nevertheless, Pilate pointed out to Jesus, as the two conferred in private, that his own nation with its highest religious leaders had delivered him to the Roman authority. This, upon the very face of it, implied that some serious crime was involved. The accusation presented to Pilate was, "We found this man perverting our nation, forbidding us to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that he himself is Christ a king" (Lk. 23:2). The essence of the matter was that Jesus was attempting to overthrow the yoke of Caesar and set himself up as a king in his stead. It is remarkable to contemplate that this is exactly what the Jews wanted in a Messiah, and now that Jesus refused to meet their designs, they pose as friends of Caesar and seek to make it appear that he is an enemy of the king.

The defense of Jesus, consisted not of a denial that he was a king, but rather of an explanation of the nature of his reign. "My kingship is not of this world; if my kingship were of this world, my servants would fight, that I might not be handed over to the Jews; but my kingship is not from the world." This constituted an admission that Jesus was a king, but that his rule would not necessarily infringe upon, overthrow, or depose that of those who ruled in a different sphere. There are two kinds of kingdoms— those of this world, and that one which is not of this world. Each has its own domain and these are not by their nature in conflict. Thus, one may render unto Caesar the things that are his, while at the same time rendering unto God the things that belong unto him.

Jesus made the distinction clear, by affording Pilate a concrete example of difference. The kingdoms of this world must defend themselves with armed strength. They maintain standing

armies for defense against aggression and violation of their sovereign rights. "When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace" (Lk. 11:21). If the kingship of Jesus had been of this world, he would have drilled and trained his disciples as a fighting force, and they would have engaged in combat with the Jews, to protect his person and kingly domain. Such an army might also have posed a threat to Caesar and his legions in Palestine, but as it was, no such thing had occurred.

Although Pilate may not have understood all that was involved in the reply of Jesus, the expression "My kingship" impressed the praetor, and he said, "So you are a king?" To this, Jesus replied, "You have spoken truthfully, I am a king." The Roman governor must have considered Jesus as a fanatic, harmless and deluded, but posing no particular problem of insurrection or sedition. Leaving him in the Praetorium, he went outside and said to the waiting mob, "I find no crime in him." He then referred to the annual custom of releasing a noted prisoner at the Passover, and asked, "Will you have me release for you the King of the Jews?" They screamed, "Not this man, but Barabbas!"

Pilate wanted to curry favor with the Jews. He returned to the inside of the building and gave orders for Jesus to be scourged, as if in preparation for the sentence of death. The soldiers who administered the beating added insult to injury. They put a crown of interwoven thorns on his head, arrayed him in a purple robe, placed a reed scepter in his hand, and slapped him as they greeted him in derision, "Hail, King of the Jews!" Again Pilate went outside and announced to the Jews, "I am bringing him out to you, that you may know I find no crime in him." The purpose evidently was to excite sympathy for one whose calm demeanor and patient endurance witnessed to his innocence and freedom from guilt. Thus Pilate pointed to him and said, "Here is the man!"

When the chief priests and officers saw him, they again took up the shout, "Crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him, for I find no crime in him." The Jews answered, "We have a law, and by that law he ought to die, because he has made himself the Son of God." This was a new charge which Pilate had not previously heard. It inspired fear in his superstitious heart, and once more he took Jesus inside the Praetorium and enquired, "Where are you from?" Jesus did not reply. The governor said, "You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you, or power to crucify you?" Jesus answered, "You would have no power over me unless it had been given from above; therefore he who delivered me to you has the greater sin."

Once more Pilate sought to release him but the Jews cried out, "If you release this man, you are not Caesar's friend; every one who makes himself a king sets himself against Caesar." This was a shaft in a vulnerable spot. It was a blow which could not be ignored. The political opportunist was torn between conflicting emotions. Again he brought Jesus out to the mosaic floor where the judgment seat rested. He said to the Jews, "Here is your King!" They cried out, "Away with him, crucify him! Pilate said, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests spoke up quickly, "We have no king but Caesar!" Pilate, despairing of further reasoning, washed his hands in symbolic gesture and turned Jesus over to them to be crucified.

Jesus was taken, bearing his own cross, to the place called Golgotha, where he was crucified between two lawbreakers. It was the custom to place a written notice of the charge which resulted in execution over the head of each victim. Pilate wrote the title "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews" and attached it to the cross. It was written in three languages, Hebrew, Latin and Greek, and it was read by many of the Jews, because the place was near the city. The chief priests came and applied to Pilate for an alteration of the statement to read, "This man said, 'I am King of the Jews.'" But Pilate curtly dismissed them with

the words, "What I have written, I have written."

Far away, in the imperial city on the Tiber, the reigning Caesar sat, unaware that in a remote and insignificant area of his far-flung empire, a political appointee had just consented to a deed, the results of which would affect every soul born among men. Little did he realize that before the final act of this drama, the mighty Roman empire would topple and fall, and the stone cut out of the mountain without human agency would smite the great image of world conquest and forever shatter the hope of its reconstruction. The cross which was an emblem of shame and disgrace was to become a badge of honor, adopted by institutions of mercy and compassion. The banners of Rome would some day give way before the triumphant cross.

We should not overlook the fact that it was not the death of Jesus, but his resurrection which proved his divine Sonship, and thus his right to universal recognition as the Messiah. The death of Jesus by itself could not have constituted "good news." But the fact that he "was put to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification" (Rom. 4:25), establishes forever his sovereign prerogatives. He was "designated Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1:4). Before he died, Jesus predicted his death and resurrection. He predicated the latter upon the fact that he was the Son of God. Since God would not raise an impostor, the resurrection of Jesus is proof that he is the Son, and thus the Messiah.

It was for this reason that "he showed himself alive with many sure proofs" (Acts 1:3). The abundance of the proofs is apparent to every reader, their undeniable nature, being also clearly manifested. He appeared unto his witnesses in closed rooms and in the open road, upon a mountain and by the seaside, at early morning, in daytime, at dusk, and at night. He was seen of both men and women, by individuals, small groups, and a multitude numbering more than five hundred. He walked,

talked and ate with them. He permitted and invited close examination of his person, even urging it.

It was the resurrection which provided the theme for the early proclamation. The speech of Peter on Pentecost, reached its climax with such statements as "But God has raised him to life, having terminated the throes of death, for in fact it was not possible for him to be held fast by death," and again, "This Jesus, God has raised to life— a fact to which all of us testify." That this was the central truth emphasized, is evidenced by the anger of the priests, the commander of the temple guard, and the Sadducees, who were "highly incensed at their teaching the people and proclaiming in the case of Jesus the resurrection from among the dead" (Acts 4:1, 2).

There was an interval of forty days between the resurrection of Jesus and his ascension into heaven. During this time he gave instructions to the apostles whom he had chosen (Acts 1:2). We are limited as to our knowledge of those instructions, but we know they were related to the kingdom, for it was of this he spoke when he appeared to them at intervals during this interim period. The apostles were the ambassadors of the kingdom, and as such, were to be dispatched upon their universal mission as soon as the new monarch was coronated.

It is conceivable that these former fishermen and tax collectors would require a great deal of encouragement and assistance from him whose cause they were to represent. We do know that he confirmed what he had previously told them, and pointed out the fulfillment of all that was written in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms, concerning himself. Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said, "Thus it is written that the Christ would suffer and on the third day rise again from among the dead; and that proclamation would be made, in his name, of repentance and forgiveness of sins to all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And remember that I am about to send out my

Father's promised gift to rest upon you; but as for you, wait patiently in the city until you are clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24:44-49).

When we consider the fierce nationalism of the Galileans, and the general tenor of the Messianic belief, we should not be too surprised that "Once when they were with him, they asked him, 'Master, is this the time at which you are about to restore the kingdom for Israel?'" The breadth of vision which enabled the Jewish mind to grasp the transformation from the theocracy of Israel to the Christocracy of the universe had not yet come. And when it came it would be in reverse of the common anticipation, for instead of restoring the kingdom to Israel, it would require the restoring of Israel to the kingdom of God.

The reply of Jesus to the apostles is an example of kindliness and brevity. "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has reserved within his own authority; and yet you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the remotest parts of the earth." How pregnant is that statement with portent of things to come. It contains no learned or lengthy discussion of the nature of the Reign. For this the apostles were not ready. Jesus was perfectly willing to rest such matters with the Spirit, whose advent would "guide them into all truth." The assurance that they would be witnesses, not only within the confines of Palestine, but to the remotest bounds of the earth, was sufficient just now to convey the universal nature of the Reign, and while they could not yet grasp the significance of the expression, they would later reflect upon it, and know its meaning.

According to Luke, these words represented the final message as Jesus took leave of these men. There was no maudlin sympathy, no tearful kiss or embrace. He was "as a man going into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return." The simple dignity of the occasion strikes us with its

appropriateness. "When he had said this, and while they were looking at him, he was carried up, and a cloud closing beneath him, hid him from their sight." Nor did the men who remained indulge in paroxysms of grief. They acted, not as those who had lost a friend, but as those who had gained one. "They worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy" (Luke 24:52). Thus did they demonstrate their love, for he had said, "If you loved me you would have rejoiced because I am going to the Father" (John 14:28).

At this juncture, three topics should engage our attention. Why was it necessary for our Lord to return to heaven? What did the disciples do in the interim until his coronation? What took place at the coronation ceremony in the heavens?

Reasons for the Return

1. Jesus told the apostles, "It is to your advantage that I go away" (John 16:7). While this was difficult for them to understand, since grief filled their hearts at the time, he explained that the coming of the Advocate was contingent upon his departure. "Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you" (verse 8). The great mission of the apostles could not be filled without the Advocate, the Holy Spirit. He was to teach them everything, to bring to memory all that Jesus said unto them. He was to be a witness concerning Jesus, and enable them to testify fully and completely. He would guide them into all truth, and take what belonged to Jesus and make it known to the apostles. He would convict the world in respect of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.

2. The return of Jesus to heaven would enable his ambassadors to do greater things than he did while present upon the earth. "In most solemn truth I tell you that he who trusts in me— the things which I do he shall do also; and greater things

than these shall he do, because I am going to the Father" (John 14:12). Does this last refer to miraculous deeds as so many modern cults interpret it? If so, in what sense is the word "greater" used? It cannot refer to quantity, for the same record declares, "But there are also many other things which Jesus did — so vast a number indeed that if they were all described in detail, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would have to be written" (John 21:25). It cannot refer to the quality of physical miracles, for nothing can exceed the raising of Lazarus from the tomb, as a demonstration of power.

We believe that the proper understanding of this expression has to do with a contrast of the spiritual with the physical realm. The apostles were to do greater things because Jesus was going to the Father. There was nothing about his going to the Father which would empower them to do greater physical acts than he could accomplish while he was here. He had long since told this same group, "Cure the sick, raise the dead to life, cleanse lepers, drive out demons" (Matt. 10:8). What was to be their task which Jesus could not accomplish during his sojourn on earth, and which they could accomplish only by his return to heaven, and which constituted "greater things" than miracles attesting his divine mission?

We feel that the secret to this is revealed in the proclamation of the apostles, of which the speech of Peter in the house of Cornelius is typical. "That same Jesus God raised to life on the third day, and permitted him to appear unmistakably, not to all the people, but to witnesses— men previously chosen by God— namely, to us, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. And he has commanded us to preach to the people and solemnly declare that this is he who has been appointed by God to be the Judge of the living and the dead. To him all the prophets bear witness, and testify that through his name all who believe in him should receive the forgiveness of his sins" (Acts 10:39-43).

The proclamation of Jesus as judge of the living and dead, and of forgiveness of sins through his name, could only be made after he had taken the throne by appointment of the Father. Our Lord, with one exception, limited his miraculous works to the Jewish people, but the apostles were to announce liberation from sin to the believers of all nations. This is the significance of the term "all who believe" as uttered by Peter in the Gentile home. Just as the saving of souls is superior to the healing of physical ailments, so their work, under the authority of Jesus, was superior to all that had previously been done. One secured an extension of temporal life, the other brought an offer of eternal life.

3. Another reason for the ascent of Jesus was to prepare a place for his disciples. He comforted the sorrowing apostles with the assurance that there are numerous places of abode in the house of the Father, and declared his intent to go before and make reservations for their coming. This does not imply that he was going away to build or construct some place not now in existence, but rather to arrange for an abode for the faithful. He told them that if he went away he would return and take them unto him so they might always be together.

4. The office of high priest, which Jesus now occupies, necessitated his return to heaven. It is God's design that his people constitute a royal priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices, and such a priesthood requires a notable high priest. But "if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all" (Heb. 8:4). "Moreover we needed just such a high priest as this— holy, guileless, undefiled, far removed from sinful men and exalted above the heavens" (Heb. 7:26). "Inasmuch, then, as we have in Jesus, the Son of God, a great high priest who has passed beyond the sky, let us hold firmly to our profession of faith." Under the first covenant, national atonement could not be made until the high priest entered the most holy place with the blood of the sacrifice. "But Christ appeared as a high priest of the blessings that are soon to come by means of the greater and more perfect

tent of worship, a tent which has not been built with hands— that is to say does not belong to this material creation— and once for all entered the holy place, taking with him not the blood of goats and calves, but his own blood, and thus procuring eternal redemption for us" (Heb. 9:11, 12).

5. Even more appropriate to the theme of this book is the fact that it was necessary for Jesus to return to heaven in order to rule as king over a universal domain. Zechariah predicted that he would build a temple of the Lord, and bear the glory, that he should sit and rule upon his throne; and be a priest upon his throne (6:13). Since he could not be a priest until he was upon his throne, and since he could not be a priest upon earth, it was necessary for him to leave the earth in order to sit and rule upon his throne.

The ascension of Jesus bore the same relation to his glorification that his descent did to his humiliation. Only by means of return to heaven could there be a resumption of the pre-incarnate glory with the Father. "I have glorified thee on earth, having accomplished the work which thou gavest me to do, and now, Father, glorify thou me in thy own presence with the glory which I had with thee before the world was made" (John 17:4, 5). Because of his humiliation the glory accorded him was increased. "And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him, and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:8-11). "He reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature, upholding the universe by his word of power. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has obtained is more excellent than theirs" (Heb. 1:3, 4).

The Scene on Earth

The Mount of Olives lies east of Jerusalem. From its steep ascent, which is two hundred feet higher than the walled city, one looks down upon "the city of the great king." It was a fitting spot from which the Prince of David could begin his journey to the far land to receive his kingdom. The little group of men walked together with the Master over the road their feet had so often pressed. The conversation was no different than it had been upon numerous such occasions in the past. They came at last to the crown of the mount, as far as Bethany.

The fateful moment had come. He had long ago prepared them for the occasion, with the words, "The days will come, when the bridegroom is taken away from them." Now he lifted up his hands and blessed them and "while he blessed them, he parted from them" (Luke 24:51). One moment he was speaking, and the next they beheld him ascending into the air. As they stood transfixed, watching his receding form, straining their eyes to see him until the last, a cloud enveloped him and took him from their sight. Still they remained with upturned faces, watching as if they expected him soon to return and resume his conversation. Then they suddenly became aware of two additions to their number, men in white robes, who gently broke the spell of awe with the words, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

We do not know which of the apostles first spoke, or what was said. But the little group turned back toward Jerusalem, walking the familiar path. They were not melancholy. There was in the bosom of each a feeling of triumph. Their faith had been vindicated. By going back to the Father, Jesus had proven that he had come from the Father. "He that ascended is he also that descended." God had not only raised him from the dead but he had now exalted him. "They returned to Jerusalem with great

joy" (Luke 24:52). When they entered the city they went to the upper room which was their temporary abode. Here they could meditate upon and converse about the recent happenings in relative privacy.

The days of waiting were not spent in idleness. The apostles were Jews and scrupulously observed the requirements of Judaism. They were approaching the second great annual feast of the Jews, and their minds would be attuned to its meaning and observance. Each day they assembled twice at the temple at the time of the daily sacrifices, and with the devout Jews joined in prayer, according to their custom (Luke 24:53). In addition to this, they devoted themselves to prayer in the upper room which was the gathering place of those who had been close to Jesus during his earthly stay. Here they were joined by the women, including Mary, the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers (Acts 1:14). This is the last mention of Mary and her name never appears in the sacred text after the congregation of saints was planted at Jerusalem. This is a silent rebuke to the apostate church which has developed dogmata and rituals about her.

One day, when the company of disciples was assembled, about one hundred and twenty being present, Peter stood up and called attention to the prophetic utterances relating to Judas who acted as a guide for those who arrested Jesus. Referring to David, it was acknowledged that he spoke under the impulse of the Holy Spirit, and the scripture had to be fulfilled with reference to the dereliction of Judas. Attention was also called to the fact that another was to take the vacated office. In view of this, Peter urged that an additional witness of the resurrection be selected from among those who had been companions of Jesus during the entire course of his personal ministry, from his immersion in Jordan to his ascension into heaven. The company of believers thereupon put forward two men, Joseph Barsabbas and Matthias. Calling upon God to show which one he had chosen as a replacement for Judas, they cast lots, and the lot fell

upon Matthias.

When nine days had gone by since the departure of Jesus, the preparation for Azereth, or Pentecost, began. All day long bands of pilgrims were streaming through the gates into the holy city. It was now early summer and Palestine lay in all her glory. Traveling conditions were less arduous at this season of year, and thousands came to the celebration of "the day of firstfruits" who could not attend other annual feasts. The bazaars and markets were teeming with a polyglot mass. Jews were present from every nation under heaven. Every group seemed to have a distinct dialect, and as one passed through the crowds, he could hear the languages of Persia, Arabia, Asia Minor, Egypt, Rome, and a score of other places. In addition to the Jews, there were numerous proselytes, many of them men of reputation and distinction in the Greek world, who had become converts to Judaism because of its high code of ethics and morality.

As dusk arrived a hush of expectancy fell over the milling throng. Suddenly the stillness was broken by a blast blown on the trumpets of the priests. There would be little sleep this night. The temple and courtyard were lighted with hundreds of lamps. The great altar of bronze had been literally as well as ceremonially cleansed. It reflected the glitter of the lamps and torches in its polished surface. As soon as the midnight hour arrived, the gatekeepers threw open the gates to the temple. Every sacrifice which the people proposed to bring to the feast had to be carefully scrutinized and examined by the priestly officials before the time for the morning sacrifice. All night long the worshipers came and went, securing the approval of the priests.

When morning dawned and the sun peeped over the rim of the eastern hills and flooded Palestine with light, the inspection came to a halt. It was time for the sacred activities of the day to commence. The choir of Levites was solemnly arranged on the steps, the children of the Levites standing in formation below

them. A single flute began its piping tones and the great choir began the chant of the "Hallel." The multitude, stretching as far as eye could see, repeated the words, or sometimes responded with the appropriate portion. It was a time of deep solemnity, of awe-inspiring pageant. The special offerings of the day consisted of two young bulls, a ram, seven male yearling lambs, and a male goat. The latter was led to the great altar first, and the hands of the priest were laid solemnly upon its horns. The priest bore down with all of his weight upon the head of the sacrifice and confession of sins was made in a loud voice. Then the animal was stretched out with neck bared to receive the keen blade of Damascus steel which severed the jugular, the spurting blood from which was caught in a silver vessel pointed at the bottom so that it could never be set down, and in which the blood could be constantly agitated to keep it from coagulating until it could be sprinkled upon the horns of the altar.

The principal part of the day's ritual was the presentation of the two wave loaves. Each of the three great annual feasts was so timed as to constitute a harvest festival. The paschal feast came at the barley harvest; Pentecost at wheat harvest; the feast of tabernacles at the vintage-gathering. A little more than three pecks of wheat were selected from the best in the land of Palestine. The grain was brought to the temple, threshed out of the heads, pulverized and then ceremonially put through twelve sieves. An omer of flour was selected for each loaf, and mixed with lukewarm water, then patted out long and flat, each loaf being seven handbreaths long, four handbreaths wide, and four fingers thick. These loaves, each of which weighed more than five pounds, were baked in the temple.

The little band of followers of the Nazarene, like all devout Jews, had looked forward to the great day with its throng of pilgrims from every land. Now that it had dawned, drawn together by previous association and by a common bond cemented by a mutual faith that Jesus was the Messiah of whom the prophets had spoken, the twelve found themselves in the

same room. Suddenly there swept over them a sound from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind. The house was filled with the sound. They looked at each other in amazement, and their wonder grew as they saw tongues with the appearance of flame sitting upon the heads of all. Immediately they became aware of the presence of the Holy Spirit, and being filled therewith, their own tongues were loosed and they began to speak in various languages of mankind as the Spirit controlled their tongues and prompted them to give utterance to the mighty works of God. They recognized this visual and oral demonstration as a confirmation of the fact that Jesus was now on his throne (Acts 2:33). The restrictions imposed were lifted, the monarch was seated in power, and it was now time for their work as ambassadors to commence. Accordingly, they proclaimed the authority of the Sovereign and entreated men to recognize it. The Christocracy had begun.

The Heavenly Scene

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It was now the morning of the fortieth day since his slumber in the tomb of the Arimathean had ended and Jesus had arisen to remove the death napkin from his face, to fold it and place it carefully upon the stone bench. The stone fitted into the slot of the door had been rolled aside by the two messengers, and as he prepared to walk from the sepulcher, they entered, and after saluting him took their respective places where he had lain, one at the head, the other at the feet. Since that day he had been with his followers, showing himself alive with frequent undeniable proofs. Often he had enjoyed intimate association with just a few of them, but upon the occasion in Galilee more than five hundred had assembled to look upon him and listen to him.

Now the work he had come to do was almost finished. The sleepless nights, the weary marches, the hunger and thirst, the prick of thorns, the agony of the cross, all of these, were behind him. These things he had endured while despising the shame, for he was confident of the joy that awaited. And today that joy would be his. He would leave the earth which he entered as a babe, from the summit of favored Olivet. As they walked toward it, he gave his final instructions to the little group whom he called so many months ago. Little did they know what the future held for them, but all things work together for good to those who love the Lord.

At last they stood at the place. Before them lay Jerusalem,

the inhabitants not dreaming of the drama unfolding just outside their gates. He lifted his hands in benediction, and blessed them, and as he did he felt the transformation. Slowly he began to rise from their midst and as he ascended he could see their upturned faces, with mingled emotions written upon their features. His form grew smaller to their gaze and a cloud enveloped him. As he went upward the two messengers speeding earthward passed him, and he knew they would reassure the apostles.

Of a sudden he was met with the twenty thousand chariots of heaven, and surrounded by thousands upon thousands of the messengers. He had gone forth upon the announcement of Gabriel as a helpless babe, his birth signaled by the choir of messengers to humble shepherds. Now he was returning as a conqueror, the keys of death and Hades in his grasp. Long generations ago, he whose throne would now be occupied, moved by the Holy Spirit, had sung of this occasion "With mighty chariots, twice ten thousand, thousands upon thousands, the Lord came from Sinai into the holy place. Thou didst ascend the high mount, leading captives in thy train, and receiving gifts from men" (Psalm 68:17, 18).

As the triumphant processional approached the gates of the city of the Eternal One, the mighty host burst into a reverberating chant, "Lift up your heads, O gates! and be lifted up, O ancient doors! that the King of glory may come in." The thousands of messengers inside, as if in challenge to such a bold demand, responded in unison, demanding identification, "Who is the King of glory?" The host accompanying him in joyful acclaim cried out, "The Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord, mighty in battle! Lift up your heads, O gates! and be lifted up, O ancient doors! that the king of glory may come in!" Once again came the challenge, "Who is this king of glory!" The response followed, "The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory!" The gates swung wide and the procession entered (Psalm 24:7-10).

"Thrones were placed and one that was ancient of days took his seat;

his raiment was white as snow, and the hair of his head was like pure wool;

His throne was fiery flames, its wheels were burning fire.

A stream of fire issued and came forth from before him;

A thousand thousands served him,

and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him . . .

And behold, with the clouds of heaven

there came one like a son of man,

and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him" (Daniel 7:9-13).

The fullness of glory was manifest. In the midst of the city of the Eternal One stood the throne with the vacant place at the right hand of the Ancient of Days. Around the throne was the rainbow that looked like an emerald. There were twenty-four additional thrones, and upon these were seated the twenty-four elders, dressed in shining white, and with golden crowns on their heads. Before the throne was as it were a sea of glass, like crystal. Round the throne, on each side were the four living creatures, each with six wings, and full of eyes all round and within, chanting without cessation "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!" With the ascription of praise by the living creatures, the elders would prostrate themselves before the throne, and removing their crowns would cast them before the throne, while chanting,

"Worthy art thou, our Lord and God,

to receive glory and honor and power, for thou didst create all things,

and by thy will they existed and were created" (Rev. 4).

It was such a scene as greeted the Son of man when he was presented before the Ancient of Days for the coronation ceremony. The inaugural address was made by the Father in the audience "of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands." To these waiting thousands he made his proclamation "Let all God's angels worship him." In this one sentence the hierarchy of celestial messengers— principalities, powers, dominions— all were made subject to the Prince of peace.

Turning to the Son, the Father said, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever. Thou hast loved righteousness and hated lawlessness, therefore God, thy God, has anointed thee with the oil of gladness beyond thy comrades. Sit at my right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool. The Lord sends forth from Zion your mighty scepter. Rule in the midst of your foes! The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, 'You are a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.' Thou, Lord, didst found the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of thy hands; they will perish, but thou remainest; they will all grow old like a garment, like a mantle thou wilt roll them up and they will be changed. But thou art the same, and thy years will never end."

Anointed with the oil of gladness, wearing the diadem of grace, the Son sat down with the Father on his throne. The Reign of the Messiah was now a fact.

The Nature of the Kingdom

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The kingdom of the Messiah is one of conquest. It exists to subdue and subjugate the forces of rebellion. The words of God to the Son were, "Sit at my right hand till I make your enemies your footstool." This regime would never have been inaugurated if all the forces of the universe had remained faithful unto the Creator. It was made necessary by revolt in heaven and transgression on earth. When Satan was cast out of heaven and Adam was cast out of the garden of Eden, a state of rebellion against the authority of God was in evidence. Thus the duration of the Christocracy is marked by the time essential, in the divine wisdom, to bring the enemies into submission.

It is in view of these considerations that it was written, "The Lord sends forth from Zion your mighty scepter. Rule in the midst of your foes!" (Psalm 110:2). "Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all enemies under his feet" (1 Cor. 15:28). So long as there is one alien force in the universe actively opposed to God, the design and order of creation for the glorification of God is not yet perfected. Before creation God was everything. During creation he was everything. But with the advent of rebellion upon the part of rational beings the picture was changed. It became necessary to inaugurate a Reign which would restore the primal purpose, and make God everything to everyone. "When all things are subjected to him, then the Son

himself will also be subjected to him who put all things under him, that God may be everything to every one" (1 Cor. 15:28).

There are three regions in which responsible created beings exist. These are the celestial, the terrestrial, and the infernal. They are referred to as heaven, earth, and under the earth. The first is inhabited by the orders of angels, the second by men, and the third by the orders of demons. In all of these regions there must come a recognition of the authority of God. Accordingly God has bestowed all authority upon Jesus that he might accomplish the eternal purpose. "God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:9-11). Those who refused to acknowledge the God of glory must now acknowledge the authority of his heir to the glory of God.

The Reign of the Messiah, like every other creation of God, is perfectly adapted to conditions as they are and to the achievement of heaven's design. It is for this reason that it is an absolute monarchy, and not a democracy or republic. The God of the universe was not limited to the simile of a kingdom because the people of that day were not familiar with republics. Four centuries before Jesus was born of the virgin, the philosopher Plato had written his classic "The Republic." There are those citizens of democracies who feel that their form of government is the highest attainable, and they are troubled at the thought of God's choice of a type of government which is deemed inferior. But the conclusions are based upon false premises.

A democracy is the best form of rule in the present state of mankind, when the constituents are filled with avarice, greed and false ambition. In such a government, unjust rulers can be more easily dispossessed and shorn of authority. The public

conscience, being driven to the point of revolt, will rise up and cast out of power those who would exercise despotic inclinations. In human monarchies there may often be a perpetuation of error and misery. The ruling family passes on to its successors the same evil tendencies, and these are often defended because of tradition and ancestral worship. It is difficult to overthrow a long established and well rooted dynasty.

But a democracy is best adapted to a state of peace and tranquility. It is not suited to a state of war. As proof of this we need only to cite how republics in times of great national danger from without, seek out a leader and delegate to him special powers, exalting him as a central figure, and surrendering their rights and privileges unto him. A monarchy is best fitted to prosecute war, for if the king be judicious and skilful, and his subjects be loyal, he can direct his forces to gain the maximum benefit. The Reign of heaven was created to make war incessantly against an implacable foe. In this great conflict there can be no cessation of hostilities and no flag of truce. It would not be feasible to allow the decisions to rest with a majority of the citizens, for even a majority may be mistaken.

Republics are always the outgrowth and by-products of abuses in government. It has ever been thus. The American colonies were first ruled by a monarch, and it was never considered by the early emigrants that they would establish a commonwealth which would revolt against the king of England. But when intolerable restraints were imposed and taxation was levied without representation being granted, this was branded as tyranny, and a revolution ensued. The Declaration of Independence was a statement of protest against violations of human rights, and our present form of government is an experiment in preservation and protection of those rights. Yet, in time of national fear, special powers are bestowed upon the chief executive, which really make the fate of the nation hang upon the decisions of one man.

If the crown could repose upon the wisest head and the scepter be wielded by the most benevolent hand in the realm, a monarchical government would be the most efficient, least cumbersome, and safest. But among fallen men, the wisest in jurisprudence are not always kind and considerate; and the philanthropist does not always possess wisdom and discretion. Therefore, a government which will permit dismissal of the inefficient and unworthy is highly esteemed. But in the Reign of heaven this is not so, and the salvation of the subjects is contingent upon the continuance of one in office. "Consequently he is able for all time to save those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7:25).

Because the Reign of heaven was instituted to put down revolt against God, and to subjugate those forces which oppose the will of the ruler of the universe, the language used by the Holy Spirit to describe the present state and activities of that Reign is that which describes war and conflict. Thus Jesus is reported as saying, "Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword" (Matt. 10:34). The recorder of the final book describes him as a general at the head of his armies, going forth to smite the nations. "I saw heaven opened and behold, a white horse! He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems; and he has a name inscribed which no one knows but himself. He is clad in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, followed him on white horses. From his mouth issues a sharp sword with which to smite the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron; he will tread the wine press of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has a name inscribed. King of kings and Lord of lords" (Rev. 19:11-16).

In this great conflict of the ages all the powers of heaven, earth and hell are engaged. It is not an exaggeration to state that the revelation of God conceives of every responsible being in the whole universe as actively associated in the fight. It is a titanic struggle between all of the forces marshaled under the banner of right and those dedicated to the cause of error. The generalship is invested in supernatural beings, on one hand the Messiah of God, on the other the great opposer and slanderer, Diabolos. Angels and archangels of the celestial realm are opposed by demons of the infernal regions. The souls of men are the stakes for which the incessant conflict is waged.

The Messiah employs two means to overcome the enemies of God, reconciliation and destruction. That which cannot be reconciled unto God must be destroyed. In the end there must remain no weapon fashioned against the Eternal One; no alien voice which can dispute the absolute sovereignty of God over his universe. It would not be incorrect to say that the Reign of the Messiah is one of total destruction. He must either destroy the evil in our lives, or we must suffer destruction.

The arrangement of God is perfectly adapted to this end. It preserves inviolate the will of God and the will of his creatures. Any plan which compelled man against his will to obey God, would destroy the sovereignty of man; any plan which compelled God to accept man without willing obedience would destroy the sovereignty of God. But, in the ultimate, the will of God, which is absolute in right and truth, must prevail. Accordingly, he has revealed that will to man, and life on earth constitutes a period of probation during which man examines that will, and accepts or rejects it, with full knowledge of the consequences of either act. "For he has made known to us in all wisdom and insight the mystery of his will, according to his purpose which he set forth in Christ *as a plan for the fulness of time,* **to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth" (Eph. 1:9, 10).**

Since man is so constituted that he can learn more readily

by being shown, than by merely being told, God graciously arranged for one to come as an example, so that if there was any question as to the application to life of the principles of the revealed will, we might see them worked out practically, in his personal words and deeds. "For in him the whole fulness of deity dwells bodily, and you have come to fulness of life in him who is the head of all rule and authority" (Col. 2:9, 10). By his perfect submission to God he has shown men how to overcome feelings of hostility. Evil deeds are acts of rebellion against divine authority and estrange us from heaven. "For in him all the fulness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. And you, who once were estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in the body of his flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable before him, provided that you continue in the faith" (Col. 1:19-23).

It should be noted that in the passage quoted above it is affirmed that as the fulness of the Deity dwells bodily in the Messiah, so we come to fulness of life in him. This proves there is more to life than mere existence. Men exist before they are in the Christ. It is *fulness of life* **which cannot be obtained out of him. Since the fulness of Deity dwells in him, then those who dwell in him, are again in contact with Deity. God and man find a common meeting place in the Messiah. Please observe that the whole quotation is "You have come to fullness of life in him** *who is the head of all rule and authority."*

Man was alienated from God by sin, which is the direct result of disrespect for God's authority. Sin separated man from God. "Your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you" (Isa. 59:2). Being cut off from God, he was cut off from the source of life. Now, by the exaltation of the Messiah to complete authority in the universe, it is possible for man to regain in him what was lost in Adam. "The first Adam became a living being; the last Adam

became a lifegiving spirit" (1 Cor. 15:45). But the fulness of life cannot be enjoyed by one who does not recognize the supreme rule and authority of the Messiah. Life in its fulness begins with full surrender of life to the Lord of life.

As the Reign of heaven is adapted to the subjugation and restoration of mankind and the final triumph of truth, the message of the King is also adapted to the needs of mankind and to the present condition of the human family. As an alien, man needs first to be reconciled unto God; then, having been reconciled he needs to be trained in the course of conduct which will provide him the greatest happiness here and in the world to come. Since the Reign of the Messiah is a constitutional monarchy, man requires first to be informed as to the requirements essential to becoming a citizen; and after having been instructed into citizenship, he needs to be schooled in the duties and responsibilities of his new relationship. Thus, it can readily be seen that two diverse messages must be given by the King, one addressed to aliens for the purpose of induction; the other to citizens for the purpose of instruction.

Those who are aliens and hostile tend to look askance at any overtures of reconciliation. It was, therefore, necessary for the Messiah to perform an act of such stupendous importance, when he took his throne, that the suspicions of men would be allayed and they would become convinced of his grace. Accordingly, when his chosen envoys, empowered by the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven, announced his sovereign rule and the terms of amnesty, he immediately pardoned his own murderers who accepted the terms, and made them adopted members of the heavenly family with full rights of citizenship. Thus he demonstrated to all men the possibility of salvation from past errors and the complete forgiveness of heaven.

The message proclaimed by the heralds to aliens was designated "the Good News." Since God in all of his dealings with men never required them to do any thing except upon the

basis of what he had done for them, the Good News is primarily an announcement of facts with reference to what had been done for sinful men. The facts announced are obviously such as will command the attention of men in need of salvation, and likewise furnish the power and motivation to take the necessary steps to secure such salvation.

The foundation of the Good News, and that which is called "of first importance" consists of three prime facts, viz., Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, he was buried, and he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures (1 Cor. 15:3, 4). To confirm the testimony relative to these facts, credible witnesses who saw him after his resurrection, are introduced (1 Cor. 15:5-8). Related to these fundamental principles are certain additional facts which grew out of them. The Christ who was raised the third day ascended to heaven, is now seated at the right hand of the Father in regal splendor, and will come again as he went into heaven, and those who await his coming may be in his realm and be joint heirs of his glory. The Good News is really nothing more nor less than tidings of victory over sin, death and hell. It is a proclamation of "victory in Jesus!"

The Good News was designed for those who were alienated from God. It was not a course of instruction for citizens, but a proclamation to those not in the kingdom. Thus the Good News was as fully proclaimed on Pentecost as it ever was. That which is designated by the Holy Spirit as "the Good News of the Christ" was declared in its fulness on that day. It was heard, accepted and embraced in its fulness by those who joyfully received the word. Nothing was ever added to the gospel of the Messiah after that date, nor was that gospel ever proclaimed to citizens of the kingdom. It was not intended for them, and while they might be reminded of it as the basis for their hope, the proclamation of it to them was without warrant, seeing they could not have become citizens without having embraced it.

Before his ascension, the Messiah commissioned his envoys to "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He who believes and is baptized shall be saved." The gospel was to be proclaimed to make believers. Belief and baptism were not necessarily a part of the proclamation. They constituted the reaction to the proclamation of those who had good and honest hearts. They were responsibilities devolving upon the sincere hearers of the Good News. One might have heard the Good News in its fulness and yet have refused to believe it or be immersed. The proclamation of the Good News was one thing, the immersion of those who believed it was a wholly different thing, which prompted Paul to write, "For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel" (1 Cor. 1:17).

It is a common error of surface students and casual thinkers to assume that the term "gospel" or Good News, used for the proclamation of the envoys, embraces the scope of the entire new covenant scriptures, and covers the message to sinner and saint alike. The absurdity of this can easily be seen upon a little reflection. If the historical account of Acts, the epistolary writings, and the apocalyptic descriptions and symbols, are all part of the gospel of the Messiah, not one of the apostles ever fully proclaimed that gospel, for each had only a part of the revelation. Further, no congregation of saints during the lifetime of the apostles had ever obeyed the gospel, for not one had a complete compilation of the new covenant scriptures. Yet Paul wrote to the Romans that he had *fully preached the gospel of Christ* **from Jerusalem and as far round as unto Illyricum. Certainly the book of Romans was not part of the gospel he had already preached, for he was just then writing it. In the same book he declares, "They have not all obeyed the gospel," but if the gospel includes the whole of the new covenant revelation none of them had obeyed it, for they did not yet have it.**

The truth of the matter is that the Good News was the proclamation of the king to aliens providing the basis upon

which they could enlist as citizens. In the capacity of citizens they were furnished with the apostles' doctrine which formed a course of instruction for the perfection of the saints. This was revealed as circumstances demanded and the need arose. In its completeness it represents the constitution of the divine monarchy. This law is applicable only to the citizens of the kingdom. Every nation which receives unto itself those who come from abroad has a law of naturalization. Once that law has been obeyed it never needs repetition, nor do those who have become citizens need again to hear a proclamation of it. But the law of the land may contain many statutes which have to be repeatedly obeyed.

Since the citizens must continue to dwell in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom they are to shine as lights in the world, provision has been made for their mutual strengthening of each other, so that they may build one another up in the most holy faith. To effect this, a memorial feast to show the Lord's death has been prescribed, and to this feast all are required to come regularly until the Lord returns. The Lord's Supper is to be eaten at his table in his kingdom (Luke 22:30). It belongs only to those who are citizens. Being a matter of joint participation, the Supper is a part of the fellowship of believers in the Messiah.

In order to achieve the divine purpose on earth, the envoys of the king gathered into communities or congregations, those in each locality who were inducted into citizenship. These citizens, with qualified seniors selected from their number and ordained as bishops, and with other qualified men ordained as deacons or servants, constituted the church of God, or body of the Christ, in each area. The Lord's table was the rallying point for such congregations of saints, and was the flag which, planted upon new territory, indicated that such territory had been taken into possession for the absent King. So long as the table remained, and loyal subjects gathered about it, that long the territory was in the name of the King.

Each community of saints throughout the universe is a golden lampstand holding up the truth as the light of the world, and in the midst of these the Son of man is depicted as standing, shedding forth the blessing of his presence. These communities in the aggregate compose the kingdom of God on earth, with each of the citizens as a steward who is entrusted with the goods of the Master "to occupy until his return."

Misunderstanding the Kingdom

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The kingdom of the Messiah is the culmination of the divine plan for the ages. It has been created to conquer and subdue every alien thought and bring into captivity every stronghold of opposition. Its citizens upon earth are sanctified men and women who have been born again. They are the living representatives of the power and majesty of the monarch whom they have accepted to rule and reign over them. To the extent they are such the kingdom will be a potent force in any community; to the extent they are not, it will lose its influence over the hearts of men.

In every generation there are threats to the welfare and progress of the kingdom, created by false conceptions of those who are members of it. Just as in every nation there are citizens who do not grasp the principles of their respective constitutions, and who manifest subversive tendencies, so it has ever been in the kingdom of the Messiah. One who reads the history of the church of God as it is portrayed in the new covenant scriptures cannot help but see how much of it is devoted to detailing the errors in the thinking of those who were its constituency, and the correction of such errors.

It is difficult for the finite mind to grasp the majestic greatness of the kingdom. There is ever a tendency to believe that the kingdom of heaven is advanced by human philosophy and eloquence. The kingdoms of this world have all produced their statesmen and these have generally been individuals who

could sway and bend the masses by word and gesture. Beholding the material fortunes of worldly kingdoms rise under the dominant influence of orators, those who compose the kingdom of heaven, motivated by ambition for its success, are constantly subject to the temptation to employ the same means. It is for this reason schools for special clergymen are inaugurated, and certain select members of the citizenry given special training in such theological seminaries. The kingdom of heaven is thus made dependent for its advancement upon a human auxiliary. In every such instance the best interests of the divine institution have been betrayed.

The betrayal has come not so much from the human organization, as from the spirit or philosophy which gave it birth. The idea that the kingdom of the Messiah is dependent upon the linguistic attainments of men, leads to the selection of certain fluent ones of the community who are polished and perfected and put forward as the champions of the Cause. This very act excludes the body of the citizenry from active participation, breeding in the masses who have had no access to professional training a feeling of inferiority. The whole vicious circle proceeds from a lack of recognition that the ways of God are not the ways of men, and that he has not selected the powerful to shame the weak; but has chosen the foolish to shame the wise (1 Cor. 1:27).

This very problem existed in aggravated form in one of the communities of saints planted through the efforts of Paul, Silas, and Timothy. Corinth, located upon the isthmus of Greece, was a city of wealth, luxury, and voluptuousness. Under the guise of religion, immorality was practiced in conjunction with idolatry, and the temples of the gods were virtual houses of assignation. Yet the city was known for the beauty of its architecture, the wisdom of its philosophers, and the power of its statesmen. Into this city of mingled vice and wisdom came the humble Jew, of whom the Corinthians said, "His bodily presence is weak, and his speech of no account" (2 Cor. 10:10). Refusing to prey upon

them, to take advantage of them, or to put on airs among them (2 Cor. 11:20), he stood among them in weakness, fear, and much trembling. But the glory of the cross is emphasized by the weakness of the human vessel who bears it, and its power is in direct ratio to the humility of its servant. It is an axiom of God that "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in your weakness."

In this city of Grecian culture men fell captive to the sword of the Spirit and surrendered as slaves to Jesus. A colony of heaven was planted. But soon the ambitions of men began to assert themselves and rivalry with its consequent partisan spirit disrupted the fellowship of the saints. In the midst of this saddening state of affairs, word was conveyed to Paul at Ephesus, and he penned a letter to them, in which he summed up in one brief statement the difference between truth and the false concept of the factious elements. "For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power" (1 Cor. 4:20).

Since there is an unceasing conflict between these two concepts, it will be profitable for us to consider the setting in which this statement glows with such brilliance. Only thus we can learn of what the kingdom consists, and of what it does not consist. This sentence occurs at the close of Paul's condemnation of partisan factionism in the community of saints at Corinth. It is his summary of what produced that factionism. The congregation was rent and torn by schisms. These were produced by a mistaken idea as to the nature of the kingdom of God and its method of growth. Perhaps our modern factions are rooted in the same cause. It may be that if we can visualize the problems at Corinth, we can more clearly see our own problems and find a solution for them.

The nine spiritual gifts enumerated in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 were abundantly manifest in the community of saints. The grace of God was bestowed especially in the gift of speech and knowledge. It was by this means the testimony of Christ was

confirmed among them, so that they were not lacking in any spiritual gift while awaiting the completed revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ, who by it would sustain them to the end and present them guiltless in the final day of accounts (1 Cor. 1:4-8).

But, as it often happens in congregations with a multiplicity of talented men, personal ambition forged to the front, and the gifted ones forgot that "to each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good" and they began to seek a personal following. The gift of tongues was relegated to a degree of importance in the assembly which it did not deserve, and it was coveted by those who would, through it, enhance their personal popularity.

The dissensions and quarrels resulting from party rivalry were reported to the apostle by the family of a sister in the Lord, Chloe, and he immediately composed his rebuke of the situation. He showed first that there was no place for party spirit inasmuch as Christ was not divided. Since no one now on earth had been crucified for them, and they were not baptized into the name of such an one, they owed no allegiance to, and should not become partisan followers of any man, not even of Paul himself. He stated that his commission was to proclaim the Good News "and not with eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power." The contrast between eloquent wisdom and the power of the cross is here brought into sharp focus. The apostle Paul would be rejected today on the "trial sermon" basis of selecting a preacher.

He next showed that the ultimate end of following human wisdom is the rejection of God. "The world by wisdom knew not God." Accordingly, through a message which the world branded as foolishness, it pleased God to save men. And his instruments to bear that message were lowly men, not esteemed by the world. Here reference is made to the constituency of the Corinthian congregation, of whom Paul affirms, "Not many were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not

many were of noble birth" and thus, not one had any grounds for boasting in the presence of God.

But it is when he turns to his own initial service in Corinth that Paul best illustrates the method of God. He writes, "When I came to you, brethren, I did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God *in lofty words* **or wisdom." He asserts that he was in weakness and much fear and trembling, and that his speech and message were** *not in plausible words of wisdom,* **and the reason was that their faith should not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God. Again there is a bold contrast between "lofty words" and "plausible words" and "the power of God." The first are employed by men who seek to gain their purposes by human means; the second by God who knows the human heart.**

It is expected that those who are called by the power of God will boast of the Lord and not of the human instruments of his power. Those who are motivated by the compelling force of eloquence and lofty words of wisdom will obviously magnify the leader who is possessed of such rich talent, and since men differ in their philosophies, parties will form around them, and jealousy and strife result. But it is also true that those who were called by the power of God, may afterwards exalt men of special gifts and abilities with the same evil result. That was what happened at Corinth.

This condition prompted Paul to state that he could not address them as spiritual men, but as men in the flesh, as babes in Christ. He asked, "While there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh, and behaving like ordinary men?" This points up the fact that there is a difference between spiritual men and ordinary men. The latter are characterized by jealousy and strife. These are their trademarks. But men of the spirit rise above partisanship, they are not ordinary, but extraordinary men! So long as one says he belongs to this party, and another says he belongs to that party, the congregation is

composed of men devoid of real spiritual values.

Not even Paul and Apollos were saviors, but servants through whom men believed, as the Lord assigned to each. One planted, the other watered, but only God could give the growth. The one who plants and the one who waters are equal, so it is foolish to exalt either as the leader of a religious party. This necessitates a caution that no man should deceive himself. This is easily done for men are by nature hero worshipers. They either seek for prominence directly or bask in the reflected glory of one whom they have exalted.

However, the fact that God catches the wise in their craftiness and knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile, should cause one to think seriously before elevating even the wisest of men, or boasting about such. Even the holy apostles should be regarded as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Is this not a condemnation of those who speak so glibly of a Petrine doctrine and a Pauline doctrine, as if Peter and Paul were teaching diverse doctrines and leading separate groups in the primitive congregation of God?

In the fourth chapter of 1 Corinthians, the apostle reaches the summit of his reasoning relative to the basic error of thought which produced the lines of cleavage in the body. With reference to what has preceded he says, "I have applied all this to myself and Apollos for your benefit, brethren, that you may learn by us to live according to scripture, that none of you may be puffed up in favor of one against another." The crowning act of deflation for egotism is found in the questions, "Who sees anything different in you? What have you that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if it were not a gift?"

With this the apostle paints a graphic picture of the difference between the life of ease in the Corinthian congregation and the hardships and toils endured by the apostles. However, this was not written to shame and embarrass

them, but rather to admonish them as his beloved children. He points out that it was his love for them which caused him to send Timothy to remind them of his ways in Christ as he taught in every community of the saints. Some of his opposers were arrogantly asserting that Paul sent Timothy because he was afraid to come personally. To demonstrate his lack of cowardice he declares that he will come soon, and when he arrives, he will find not the arrogant talk but the power of these bold asserters. It is at this juncture, the apostle sets forth the nature of the kingdom. *"The kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power."*

When Paul arrived in Corinth and confronted these arrogant talkers, two divergent philosophies came face to face to clash with each other. On one side were the polished speakers, the haughty philosophers, supercilious, impertinent and unabashed. To them the advance of the kingdom depended upon the well turned phrase, the vaunting and pretentious language of pride. On the other side was the ill-clad, buffeted and homeless apostle, his hands calloused by daily toil and his fingers blackened with the prick of awl and needle. But his mission was not to match wits nor to test words; he would test the power of the arrogant boasters.

No one can read the first four chapters of this epistle without being conscious of the difference in these two concepts. One is characterized by such phrases as "eloquent wisdom," "lofty words," and "plausible words of wisdom." The other is described as foolish, weak, low and despised in the world, but it is the power of God. It is "not a wisdom of this age nor of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away."

The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power! **Every attempt of men to establish organizations for the purpose of polishing a select group of clergymen is promoted by the mistaken idea that eloquent and plausible words of wisdom are essential to the perpetuity of the kingdom. If this were the case,**

the Son of man would have chosen the scholastics of his day to herald the truth. Instead those who listened to the apostles perceived that they were "unlearned and ignorant men." The word *idiotes* means "a private or common person, an unprofessional man or layman, an unskilled person." It is the word which is translated "ignorant" in the quotation. Meyer says the two terms are practically identical, "the double designation being intended to express the idea very fully, destitute of all rabbinic culture, strangers to theological learning."

The first "Christian College" was started in Alexandria, Egypt, about A.D. 180. Its two chief objectives were to provide a Christian atmosphere in which the young could be educated, and to train and prepare talented young men to preach. The learned and erudite city of Alexandria had the greatest library of ancient times, said to have contained three quarters of a million volumes, and the site of the school was thus believed to be excellent. It was thought by many that Christianity could not withstand the onslaughts and ridicule of the educated satirists and cultivated representatives of the Platonic and Aristotelian philosophic schools, and that fluent men in the church needed to be trained to meet the opposition upon its own ground.

The first president was a converted heathen philosopher, Pantaenus, and his immediate successor in A.D. 189, was Clement, another converted heathen philosopher. In A.D. 202, the renowned scholar and universalist, Origen, assumed the post which he held for thirty years, and during his regime the school was promoted to its highest peak in prosperity and popularity. Two of Origen's students succeeded their master as president, Heracles and Dionysius in succession holding the presidency. The last teacher was Didymus in A.D. 395, and by the time he came to the position, the catechetical school had succeeded in leading the Christian world on the road to apostasy, so that Mosheim correctly branded the institution as "the grave of primitive Christianity."

Men seem to learn but little from history. Moved with pride, swept with unreasoning fears, in every generation there are those who spend their time and money to erect the same institutions and to perpetuate their errors. There has never been a human organization started to protect the church of God that did not eventually betray it and bring disaster to it. Men have yet to learn that "the kingdom of God is not in word but in power" and that God's power has not decreased nor degenerated.

Not Food and Drink

Another fruitful source of schism is the false conception that the Reign of heaven allows for no variation in personal conscience, and that there are no matters of indifference in which citizens may follow their own convictions. In every generation since its inception, the congregation of God has been harmed by well-meaning, but hurtful individuals who have sought to set themselves and their own personal consciences as the criterion for measurement of the behavior of all others, with the result that dissensions have been caused, fellowship disrupted, and the church itself subjected to ridicule by unbelievers.

The most serious aspect of this problem is that when one sets up his own conduct in matters of indifference as the basis of judgment and criticism of his brethren, he unconsciously dethrones Jesus, and enthrones himself as a judge. A recognition of this prompted James to write: "Do not speak evil against one another, brethren. He that speaks evil against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. There is one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you that you judge your neighbor?" (James 4:11, 12).

The limited view that the kingdom of God has been inaugurated to provide an arena of disputation over personal scruples, has long aggravated the body of our Lord, and in many cases has turned the church into a battleground of fratricidal strife instead of a realm of brotherhood. To offset such a condition in his own day, the apostle wrote, "For the kingdom of God does not mean food and drink but righteousness, and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 14:17). Note again the contrast. On one side is food and drink; on the other side righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. The writing of dogmas relating to food and drink, the attempt to force personal views in this realm on others to the destruction of peace and joy; all of this has been a problem through the years. Inasmuch as we should not ignore the context which provides the setting for such a definitive statement, we propose to examine the teaching of Romans, chapter 14.

The chapter is introduced with the instruction, "As for the man who is weak in faith welcome him, but not for disputes over opinions." The expression "weak in faith" does not imply a weakness in belief in Jesus, but rather implies, from the context, one who entertains certain scruples and who does not seem to realize that our relationship to the Christ is maintained by faith rather than by our attitude toward matters of indifference. There is always a grave danger that those who are strong in discernment and perception will hold in contempt those whom they deem to be overly scrupulous about such things. It will be seen, however, that these are to welcome the one who is weak in faith. The term "welcome" implies more than mere toleration. It means to receive unto the fellowship and partnership which intimately welds the whole community of saints into a unit.

The motive with which one acts is always important in the spiritual realm. Thus, the strong are not to receive the weak to sit in judgment upon their thoughts or to judge their opinions. No opinion should ever be made the basis of fellowship, none should ever be made a test of fellowship. There is room inside

the circle of fellowship for a variety of opinions upon matters which do not affect our salvation. It is wrong for the one who holds such an opinion to force it upon others and disrupt the peace and unity which ought to prevail; it is wrong for the one who does not hold the opinion to make it a subject of dispute or controversy. They should welcome each other since God has welcomed them both.

Two examples in which love should cover differences of opinion are cited by the apostle in the chapter under review. One is the matter of eating meats, the other that of attaching special importance to certain days. It is not to be concluded that these are the only two subjects in the category, but rather that the principles enunciated with reference to them will be equally applicable in all matters of the same nature. Wisdom must be exercised in determining what matters belong in the category.

In the primitive *ecclesia* of God, the subject of eating meats was one which occupied much attention. It was a common practice to dedicate an animal which was to be slaughtered for food to an idol. The blessing of the god or goddess was sought, and a choice portion of the meat might even be presented to the pagan priests for their consumption, while the residue was sold in the meat market to any purchaser. Of course it was easy for an informed person to reason that an idol was nothing but a product of human superstition, since there was but one true God, therefore, the sacrifice of an animal to the idol was only a ridiculous procedure which did not affect the quality of the meat. Such a person might purchase meat anywhere without violation of conscience.

But the problem was complicated by the fact that many who had been reared in a pagan atmosphere did not possess such knowledge, and upon seeing a brother with power of perception eating at a feast where they served meat offered to idols, the weak one might conclude that service to idols was not prohibited by God, and as a result would fall into idolatrous

practices. It was a consideration of such possibilities coupled with other things which caused some primitive Christians to appease their conscience by becoming vegetarians.

Thus the apostle wrote "One believes he may eat anything, while the weak man eats only vegetables." He was not particularly concerned as to what they ate, but he was concerned about their personal attitudes toward each other. There are always grave dangers to fellowship when there are such differences of opinion. The man whose belief will allow him to eat anything is always liable to sneer at the one whose scruples he regards as extreme and straightlaced. He tends to hold in contempt the over-particular and squeamish practices of the other. At the same time the man who is a vegetarian, and who considers the eating of meats dedicated to an idol as idolatry, is inclined to make it a test of fellowship. The temptation to judge a brother who differs from us, and especially one who feels he can justifiably do things we cannot do, is an ever present one. The weak are always more sensitive and quick to judge than the strong, and if everyone does not accept their particular pattern they conclude that it is because of an impure heart.

But God forbids the strong to despise the weak, or the weak to judge the strong. He offers two reasons. First, God has welcomed them both, and since he has done so, they are obligated to welcome each other. Both are recipients of divine grace and both are obligated to respect each other. Secondly, they do not belong to each other, but to God. It is not the business of a man to step across the fence and tell another man's servant how to plow his master's field. He is out of his place and trespasses if he does so. The apostle writes, "Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another ? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Master is able to make him stand." In other words, acceptability to the Master does not depend upon what food a man eats, "for food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do" (1 Cor.8:8).

The esteem for certain days is the second example produced. Both among Jewish and Gentile converts there was some recognition of sacred days. The Christian religion makes no provision for any holy day whatsoever. No day was counted as more sacred than any other so far as the new covenant is concerned. But some of the Jewish Christians greatly esteemed certain of their national holidays and holy days and still observed them with special regard. There is little doubt that the first disciples of the Master in Jerusalem continued to keep the sabbath as well as to attach significance to the first day of the week, after their Pentecostal experience. They also continued to celebrate their other festal occasions. There were others who treated every day alike, making no distinction in them. The apostle says that each is to be convinced in his own mind. The emphasis is as shown.

If a Jew accepts the Messiah and he wishes, as a Jew, to esteem the Passover, Hanukkah, or other special days, it is his right to do so. He cannot bind their observance upon others, but his liberty in Jesus will allow him to esteem them as sacred, provided he does not violate the law of Christ in his observance. This privilege is his by reason of his relationship to the Lord, and must not be abridged or denied by reason of his relationship to his brethren. We do not live to ourselves, but to the Lord; we do not die to ourselves but to the Lord. Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. We do not belong to each other as we belong to the Lord. We are related to each other in the spirit, but we are related only because all of us belong to the Lord. There is a realm in which we are answerable to no man on earth. In that area, we are not subject to the judgment of men, but to the judgment of God.

In view of these facts, and since the observation of days and eating of meats are matters incidental to our Christian relationship, we should be sure to place them in the proper perspective. For this reason the inspired apostle asks, "Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or why do you despise

your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God . . . So each one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. 14:10-12). This is not inserted to teach the universality or certainty of judgment, but its individuality. Since each is to give account of himself to God it is not necessary that he be accountable unto his brethren in advance of God's judgment.

It is at this juncture in his letter the apostle lays down great and abiding principles to protect the consciences of all and to save the congregation of God from dissension and disintegration. The disregard of these principles has been the cause of tragic schisms in the past. We will do well to enumerate and study them.

1. Instead of judging another we should rather turn our attention to judging self to determine if we are the means of causing another to fall. The apostle seems to recognize that there are those of such temperament they will judge someone, and his recommendation is that all such judge themselves and their conduct. The one who ate vegetables only for fear of defilement, should not judge the one who ate meat, because the day was coming when God would judge them both. On the contrary, the one who ate meat was not to exercise his liberty with arrogant disregard for the feelings of others. To insist upon the exercise of his right regardless of its effect would be a denial of the great law of love which is the essence of the Christian religion.

The insistence upon the right to eat what one pleased could well be the means of destroying another. This could be done by two ways. The weak brother might be driven completely from the fellowship and thus be lost, or he might be emboldened to eat meat in tribute to idols and thus be condemned for idolatry. So the apostle writes, "If your brother is being injured by what you eat, you are not walking in love. Do not let what you eat cause the ruin of one for whom Christ died." When personal liberty and love for others reach a conflict or crisis, there is but one answer possible to a child of God, denial of self for the welfare of

others.

2. Personal conviction with reference to a thing affects our responsibility in regard to that thing. "I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; but it is unclean for any one who thinks that it is unclean." What we think about a thing regulates what it is to us personally. This does not require that we conclude that the Lord Jesus had given Paul specific instructions pertaining to meats and kindred matters. He knew from the tenor and nature of the kingdom of the Messiah that it was not concerned about ceremonial distinctions between various types of food. Under the Mosaic economy an animal had to possess certain arbitrary marks or habits to be considered worthy of human consumption, and a differentiation was made between the eating habits of the chosen ones and other nations. The eating of certain things was a part of the system of holiness.

Under the new covenant such distinctions have been abolished. "Nothing is unclean in itself." Christians are free to eat what they please. This does not mean that they may not have a preference for certain kinds of food, or that they are obligated to eat every kind of meat. Such a meaning would violate the very thing under discussion which is personal liberty. It would be as much of an abridgement of freedom to force one to eat something he did not want as to compel him to abstain from something he wanted to eat. "Unclean" is used in the ceremonial sense as under the Mosaic dispensation. Certain animals were unclean to the Jews because of legal declaration, not because of the nature of the animal or its flesh.

But the great lesson to be derived here lies in the fact that if one esteems a thing to be unclean it is unclean to him. It may not be unclean to others or to God, but it is unclean to the one whose heart so regards it. Conscience is not a guide but an arbiter. It is a restraining influence intended to keep us in the path which reason tells us is right. Our reasoning may be wrong,

but if so, it must be altered by additional investigation of facts and data. We are not at liberty to bend our conscience and violate it against conviction. To do so will weaken it until it is useless as a safeguard. Even if a thing is right in itself, it is wrong for one to do it against his conscience. It becomes a sin to the one who so acts.

3. "So do not let what is good to you be spoken of as evil." This places an additional restraint upon the exercise of personal liberty. A thing which is harmless in itself and which appears good to one may be the means of creating confusion, strife and every evil work if persisted in without regard for the attitude of others. No Christian will insist upon doing that which is harmful, offensive or obnoxious to his brethren. His first thought is not for his personal indulgence or gratification but for the majestic cause to which he has been called. He will not deliberately and maliciously hurt that cause merely for his own satisfaction.

When one engages in a course of conduct which provokes undue criticism from others, and causes his brethren to speak out in denunciation, frequently railing and untimely controversy results. This leads to strife and factionalism with the result that the unconverted world reproaches the religion of the Messiah. How often in the past it has been said by unbelievers that "the congregation of Christians spends its energy in fighting and bickering and makes a sham out of its plea for peace." Often such conditions are the results of the stubborn insistence of some implacable person who insists upon doing what he pleases in flagrant disregard for others.

If all Christians had recognized the import and importance of this rule in the past, the pathway of religion would not be strewn with the wreckage of one time noble efforts. In reference to matters of indifference, we may be conscious of the rightness of our views, but we should be willing to surrender them for the common good and to avoid unnecessary recrimination and

reproach.

4. "It is right not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that makes your brother stumble." This rendering in the Revised Standard Version is interesting indeed. It presents the matter from a positive rather than a negative standpoint. The apostle does not say "It is *not right* to eat meat or drink wine." Instead, he says, "It is *right not* to do so." There is nothing wrong in itself with eating meat, drinking wine, or with many other things. They are questions of privilege. But "whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31). It is not to the glory of God to give needless offense and by such means to cause men to be lost. "Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, just as I try to please all men in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved" (1 Cor. 10:32, 33). We are not, for the sake of food, to destroy the work of God.

5. "Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God." The last two verses of Romans 14 are often wrested from their place and meaning by shallow reasoners. The word "faith" in these verses has to do with one's opinion and personal conviction in such matters of indifference as God has introduced in the chapter. It is a private opinion as to keeping of days, eating of meats, drinking wine, etc. Such opinions are to be cherished as personal and private. They are not to be brought forward and agitated among the saints to the disruption of fellowship or destruction of those who differ.

In the primitive congregations of saints one might eat meat at home and do so without harm, but to bring it to the love feast of the congregation would be to arouse strife and contention. Opinions, or beliefs, on these matters, are to be held to one's self before God. God knows if one eats with a clear conscience. Eating meat does not commend one to God, nor does abstaining from it do so. It is a matter of indifference with God. Therefore, eating meat will not offend God. He is not concerned with the

eating but with the conscience. But the weak brother is not concerned with the conscience but with the eating, so he will be offended. Therefore, one might eat when only God's eye beholds who could not so indulge under the inspection of others.

"Happy is he who has no reason to judge himself for what he approves." We judge ourselves by our consciences either accusing or excusing our conduct. That man is indeed happy whose conscience does not censure him for any course of action. Many there are who engage in practices which are condemned by their own consciences. They entertain honest doubts about the advisability of a certain habit or pursuit, but they persist in it regardless of consequences. They know there could be nothing wrong about abstaining from such things but they continue to do them, outraging their inner selves. Such persons are not happy here and will not be happy in the world to come. If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything (1 John 3:20).

"And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Faith, in this instance, is the opposite of doubt. It refers to a personal conviction that a thing is right or wrong. If a man eats meat while doubting that it is right to do so, it becomes wrong to him. It is not the meat that is a sin, nor is it the act of eating meat that is a sin. If such were the case it would be a sin for any person to partake of it. But the sin is in the violation of conscience. It is not the deed, but the doer, that is condemned. It is obvious that in the category of things discussed in this chapter, a thing may be a sin for one person which would not be a sin for another. That category covers things that are not wrong in and of themselves. There is nothing about a day, or the esteeming of certain days above others, which is wrong. There is nothing about meat which is wrong or sinful. Each man is to be fully convinced in his own mind regarding such things, and he may act according to his personal conscience.

It is further obvious that a thing may be a sin for one to do in one part of his Christian career which would be perfectly harmless and legitimate in another part of that career. A man might have a conscientious scruple against a certain thing when he first obeys the gospel, but by study and meditation, he may become convinced that it is legitimate. If he engaged in it at the time his conscience condemned him it would be a sin, but when through education he becomes more discerning, he could do it without sinning. The expression "For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin" simply means that anything which one does in violation of his conscience is a sin to him.

The thing of importance to be remembered in this dissertation is the statement "For the kingdom of God does not mean food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit; he who thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men." There is ever a tendency to make the kingdom of God degenerate into mere materialistic discussions. There are always those who would make it an arena of controversy over matters of indifference. The pet fads and foibles are taught and discoursed upon until the conclusion might be reached that the whole purpose of heaven was culminated by certain dietary ideas and ideals.

The congregation of God in many places is a laughingstock. The citizens of the kingdom have spent their time verbally berating each other over extreme views of one kind and another until serious men and women have become disgusted with their cavilling and bickering, and the church itself is disgraced by its fighting and quarreling. We need to catch a vision of the human dignity, magnanimity of soul, breadth of purpose, and glory of being which should characterize those who are followers of Christ. Then we can help to fulfil on earth the will of God as it is done in heaven.

The Destiny of the Kingdom

Contents

The future of the kingdom of the Messiah as it relates to this earth has been the subject of debate and speculation for many centuries. Nothing seems to intrigue the mind of man more than the fate of the universe of which he is a part. Seeking to peer inside the veil of the future, he tries to determine the time and manner of the coming of the Lord, and varied theories have been constructed around certain interpretations of the words of the Holy Spirit. One should approach any such topic with humility and reverence. It is not our purpose to become dogmatic with reference to unfulfilled prophecy, yet we deem it unfair to the reader of such a treatise to conclude without expressing those views which have crystallized through study of the living oracles.

It is not our intention to examine exhaustively any of the multitude of theories. We will discuss three which we deem of special significance, the skeptical, pre-millennial and post-millennial viewpoints. Each of these can be divided into many branches, resulting from the diverse schools of thought which have advocated them. We are primarily concerned by the fact that our Lord is coming again, we are content to await that majestic event in God's own time and way. Yet we deem it not unwise to examine some of the statements which have a direct bearing on the topic.

The word of God plainly predicted that in the last days there would come blatant skeptics who would deny the coming

of the Lord. The fact that there are many who do so is but one more attestation to the truthfulness of the Bible. The apostle Peter wrote, "First of all you must understand this, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own passions and saying, 'Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things have continued as they were from the beginning of creation'" (2 Peter 3:3, 4). It is interesting to note the motivation for their denial of the coming of the Lord, as well as the foundation for their false reasoning.

Those who scoff at the idea of the Lord's return are "following their own passions." The return of the Lord is to be for judgment. Jude repeats the words of the patriarch Enoch, "Behold the Lord came with his holy myriads, to execute judgment on all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their deeds of ungodliness which they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." He applies this directly to scoffers of the last time "following their own ungodly passions" (verse 18).

The apostle Paul wrote, "The Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance upon those who do not know God and upon those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They shall suffer the punishment of eternal destruction and exclusion from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might" (2 Thess. 1:7-9). With such a frightful destiny in store for them, profligates could find no pleasure in their carnal practices, so to stifle the voice of conscience they deny the coming of the Lord. Their scoffing words constitute "wishful thinking."

The basis of their contention is that there will be no disruption of the present order because there has never been one. The uniformity of the past assures the continuity of the future. Jesus cannot come, for if he did, this would upset the world, and the world has never suffered such an upheaval. "All things have continued as they were from the beginning of

creation." The postulate is that since God has never called the whole world into account, we have no reason to conclude that he ever will. There are two ways to handle such false reasoning, but the easiest is to show that the affirmation is contrary to fact. If there can be recalled one deviation from the normal course of events, and if it can be shown to have affected the universe of mankind, then another such event could transpire.

This is the plan of attack followed by the inspired writer. "They deliberately ignore this fact, that by the word of God heavens existed long ago, and an earth formed out of water and by means of water, through which the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist have been stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men." The same word which created the world can destroy it, and that it has the power to do so was once demonstrated.

This devastating argument can only be met by a denial of the deluge, and some skeptics claim that the Bible account is but Jewish folklore and fable, and cannot be corroborated. These only demonstrate the truth of the scriptural accusation that "they deliberately ignore facts," for every nation of antiquity has its tradition of the flood. George Smith, of the British Museum, in 1872, discovered accounts of the flood among the clay tablets sent from the library of Assurbanipal in Nineveh. These were copied from inscriptions made shortly after the flood, and certain of these have since been found. In these Babylonian accounts which credit the deluge to the gods, it is said that sin against the gods was responsible. A ship smeared inside and out with bitumen, which contained seed of life of every kind, and which finally came to rest on a mountain, is mentioned.

So numerous are the references to the deluge, that one writer of note, says, "The mythologies and histories of the ancient nations are full of remembrance of it. It is described in the stories of the Greeks and sung in the verses of the Latins. Its

memory is enshrined in the sacred books of the Parsee, the Brahmin, and the Mohammedan, and has been assigned a place in the Legend of the Scandinavian, and the mythic records of the Chinaman. Its symbols are found stamped on the coins of ancient Greece, may be traced amid the hoary hieroglyphics of Egypt, recognized in the sculptured caves of Hindostan, and detected in the pictured writings of Mexico. In Cuba and Tahiti, on the banks of the Orinoco, on the pampas of Brazil, in the mountains of Peru, and in the islands of the Pacific, the traveler has met with traces or traditions of the flood, the ark, and the rescue of the favored few."

Even more conclusive is the testimony of the man who "found the flood." This happened at Ur, about 120 miles north of Basra, near the Persian Gulf. Excavations by British and American archeologists began in earnest at this site in 1923, and opened up a real treasure trove of antiquity. Within six years, by dint of careful work, a great Sumerian city had been exposed and the explorers had opened up sepulchers of the kings with all of the wealth of objects interred with the bones of these departed monarchs. The leader of the British party was Sir Leonard Woolley, a painstaking and careful scientist. In 1929, the work was about completed, but the British leader, fearful that something of value would be overlooked, had his native workers again lowered into the lowest tomb to begin sinking a shaft. As the shaft penetrated downward, every bucket of debris which was hauled out contained potsherds and artifacts. Then, one day, the workmen sent word that they were on ground level.

The British scientist was lowered into the shaft. It was apparent that the report was correct and they were upon solid ground. The leader began to probe and bring up samples, and to his amazement he found that he was standing upon pure clay, and such clay as could only be deposited by receding waters. A check was made and it was determined that this was above the river level so it could not have been deposited by that stream. A group of his colleagues were summoned to verify his findings,

and the agreement was unanimous that it was a sedimentary deposit, but no one could account for it.

A decision was made to see if they could go through it, so the diggers were again put to work. The spades were shoved deeper and deeper and continued to bring up clay. Finally a depth of ten feet had been reached, when suddenly the clay ended, and the baskets of earth were again found filled with the rubble and debris which indicated human habitation. As the scientists sifted the fragments of pottery they sought for the smallest trace of metal, but found not one piece. The only weapon revealed was of chipped flint. The great truth broke like a beam of light.

In the distant past there had been a great inundation. It had brought the residence of man to a conclusion. When the waters receded from their turbulence, a great deposit of alluvial clay had blanketed the ruins of prior existence. When the full import of this discovery registered with the archeologists a telegraphic message flashed to Great Britain. It read simply "We have found the Flood." Sir Leonard wrote, "About sixteen feet below a brick pavement which we could with reasonable certainty date about 2700 B.C. we were among the ruins of that Ur which had existed before the flood." The spade had covered up the argument of the skeptics as it uncovered the truth of the Biblical account.

Generally speaking, the believers in the return of the Lord are divided into two classes. These are commonly designated pre-millenarian and post-millenarian. The word "millennium" is a combined form of the Latin *mille,* **a thousand, plus** *annus,* **a year. It means a thousand years, and is specifically used with reference to the thousand years mentioned in Revelation 20. In a broad sense, the pre-millenarian argues that Jesus will return, resurrect the righteous dead, and reign a thousand years upon the earth in a period of universal happiness and freedom from sin. At the close of that period the wicked dead will be raised**

and destroyed. This is purportedly a literalistic view of Revelation 20, although investigation will show that it is not necessarily so. The post-millenarian contends that the return of the Christ will be after the thousand years.

These two irreconcilable views have been the means of dividing virtually the whole of modern Christendom, although the conflict has not been confined to these latter days. In ecclesiastical history the term "Chiliasm" is used to designated the pre-millenarian view. It is from the Greek *chilioi,* a thousand. Papias is generally mentioned as the first Christian writer to maintain the doctrine. He lived in the middle of the second century and was a bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia. However, there were some who preceded him who clung to the view, and we should mention one in particular.

Cerinthus, who resided at Ephesus, while the apostle John lived there, was a Jew, who was said to have studied in Alexandria. He is credited with first teaching the errors which developed into the system of Gnosticism. This heresy eventually wreaked havoc upon Christendom. It is in refutation of the teachings of the sect that John wrote his first and second letters. In conjunction with the Gnostic theory, Cerinthus taught that as a completion of God's creative work, after the world had lasted six thousand years, there would be a universal Sabbath, the millennium, in which a new order would prevail upon the earth. The righteous, raised from the dead, would enjoy unspeakable delights and indescribable pleasures in Palestine, with their victorious King, the Messiah.

It is noteworthy that Cerinthus was a Jew, and that he is sometimes classed with the Ebionites. When Jerusalem was destroyed in A.D. 70, the last hope of retaining Christianity within the fold of Judaism was dashed. But there were still many who continued to regard the law of Moses and circumcision as of perpetual and universal obligation. The name "Nazarenes" which had been formerly applied in contempt to all believers,

was now limited to the Judaizing sect and as time passed on many of these came eventually to deny the divinity of Jesus and to hate Paul, whom they regarded as an apostate.

The millenarian views of Cerinthus may have been influenced greatly by the Jewish expectations at the time that Jesus came. There is no question but that the Palestinian Jews had contrived a splendid mental picture out of the prophecies, the comments and disputes of the sages, and the infiltration of Oriental imagery. This vision included the appearance of the Messiah, the simultaneous regeneration of all things, the resurrection of the ancient worthies and saints, and the reign of the Messiah upon earth. They confidently expected a branch of Jesse to come and regain Zion, and establish it as the capital of a universal sway. He was to stand in the holy temple on Mount Moriah and summon to his side the scattered Jews of the earth to commune with the fathers, and to "sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom."

The first resurrection was to be the portion of the seed of Abraham exclusively. In the golden age it ushered in, all Israelites would participate except those who denied the resurrection of the dead, and that the law came from heaven, and the Epicureans (Mischna, Tract. Sanh. c. 11, 12). The righteous dead were to be called from Paradise, the realm of the departed spirits, and in glorified bodies were to reign for a thousand years of bliss upon a recreated and renovated earth. It was the prevalence of this theory which helped influence the Palestinian Jews to reject Jesus of Nazareth. His manner of coming was so utterly in contrast with their expectation that they preferred to sacrifice him rather than to relinquish their preconceived notion. Nor did this view disappear with his ascension, for many of his Jewish followers devoutly expected his imminent return in conformity with the vision they had entertained. Even when Jerusalem was destroyed by Titus, and the temple razed, the millenarian aspect lingered on. It was revived in times of persecution and catastrophe, with those who

fostered it always imagining their personal exaltation to a chosen position in an earthly regime of the Messiah. Those who regard the millennium as of strictly Christian origin are mistaken, and the Article (forty-first) of the Church of England, in the reign of Edward the Sixth, is no doubt correct in designating it as a fable "of Jewish dotage."

In the second century, in addition to Papias, there were other writers of distinction who adhered to the millenarian idea. Among them was Justin Martyr. He writes, however, that there were many who did not agree with the view he held. It was not allowed to become a source of division, and by the beginning of the third century the theory was beginning to wane. Its decline was hastened, no doubt, by the fact that it became a tenet of the Montanists. About 170 A.D. Montanus, a former priest of Cybele, who had recently been converted to Christianity, announced that he was the Paraclete (Comforter) whom Jesus had promised to send. He sought to reproduce the mysticism and raptures which were a part of the pagan worship of Cybele.

Two women, Priscilla and Maximilla, who claimed to have rapturous trances, attached themselves to Montanus and travelled with him. He regarded them as oracles. The favorite theme of their visions was the approaching end of all things. No doubt the persecutions of the day motivated them to predict the imminent coming of the millennium, and they confidently prophesied that the New Jerusalem was soon coming down at Pepuza. Priscilla claimed to have seen the Lord Jesus in the form of a woman with shining raiment, and alleged that he revealed to her his speedy return, the resurrection of his saints, and the final triumph over his enemies. The extremism of the Montanists gradually separated them from the church, and there was a strong reaction to their teachings.

The next controversy over millenarianism occurred in Egypt in the city of Alexandria. An Egyptian bishop, Nepos, published a work entitled "A Confutation of the Allegorists." In

this he defended the literal interpretation of the Scriptures, and from his premises, deduced the doctrine of a millennium. After his death, this work aroused a great interest, and gained many adherents in Egypt. Coracion became the acknowledged leader of the doctrine. Dionysius, who was bishop in Alexandria, summoned a number of the clergy who were interested in the question. They convened in A.D. 262, and their discussion lasted three days. At the end of this time, Coracion acknowledged that he was convinced of his error and pledged himself to abstain from advocacy of the doctrine during his lifetime. Dionysius summed up his conclusions on the matter in two books, "Upon the Promises" and from this time on few writers of note defended the doctrine until after the rise of the Protestant sects following the Reformation.

The opinion that there will be two future personal advents of the Christ, one before and another after the thousand years in which Satan is confined, is based upon a literal interpretation of Revelation 20. That opinion holds that Jesus will come first to resurrect the righteous dead and inaugurate a universal sway of righteousness over the earth, during which the saints will reign with him in the flesh and share his triumph. Later— a thousand years later— he will come to terminate the present order in a universal judgment. To this interpretation there are some very grave and serious objections which cannot be lightly esteemed by the lover of truth.

The millenarian view must be fully set forth in this one chapter of Revelation, or it is not contained in God's revelation at all, for nowhere else is mention made of the thousand year reign, or of the first and second resurrection, as set forth here. Here are some factors of importance to consider.

1. The book of Revelation is a book of signs and symbols as all must admit. The passage relied upon is an obscure one in a book composed of highly figurative language. It is dangerous to construct a system of doctrine dependent upon such a

foundation.

2. While insisting upon a literal interpretation of this passage, millenarians do not hesitate to interpret as figurative and symbolic other portions of the book, and even of the same chapter.

3. There are some things definitely lacking in the passage which are essential to the maintenance of the theory. In the first place, the second coming of Christ is not mentioned. There is nothing said about the resurrection of bodies. The writer saw "souls" and not bodies at all. There is no mention of Christ returning to earth, nor is there anything said about a reign on earth. All of these are ingredients of the millenarian view, and it cannot be constructed without them, yet not a one of them is found in the passage which is the foundation of the system.

4. In spite of the fact that many references are made to the resurrection elsewhere, and that this subject was one of primary interest to the primitive saints, the idea of two literal resurrections, one of the righteous and another of the wicked, with a thousand year interval between, is not mentioned elsewhere, and in this case occurs couched in symbolism and imagery.

5. The view that the saints will be raised physically and will reign on the earth in the flesh, is inconsistent with the uniform teaching of the sacred writings as to the nature of the resurrection body.

a. In reply to the questions, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" the inspired writer says, "What you sow is not the body which is to be" (1 Cor. 15:37).

b. It is specifically stated that "It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body" (1 Cor. 15:44).

c. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable" (1 Cor. 15:50). In view of this, if the righteous dead are raised in the flesh they will be debarred from the kingdom.

d. "For this perishable nature must put on the imperishable, and this mortal nature must put on immortality" (1 Cor. 15:53). Flesh and blood are neither imperishable nor immortal, for "all flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers . . . " (1 Pet. 1:24).

6. The interpretation under consideration contradicts the plain teaching elsewhere that the righteous and wicked dead will be raised and judged together at the second coming of Jesus.

a. Jesus said, "Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come forth, those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment" (John 5:28, 29). This is a universal resurrection. It includes all that are in the tombs. The "all" is made up of two classes, "those who have done good" and "those who have done evil." They are to be raised the same hour and not a millennium apart.

b. Jesus said, "This is the will of my Father, that every one who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:40). This presents positive proof that the righteous will be raised at the final day, but if there is a thousand years following, it cannot be the last day. It will not help to say that "time" will cease to be counted when Jesus comes to begin a pre-millennial reign, for that would negate the idea of a literal thousand years. A literal year is composed of days.

c. The wicked will be judged on the same day the righteous are raised. "He who rejects me and does not receive my sayings has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge

him on the last day" (John 12:48).

d. On the same day that Jesus comes to be glorified in his saints, he will inflict vengeance on the wicked. "When the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance upon those who do not know God and upon those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They shall suffer the punishment of eternal destruction and exclusion from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints" (2 Thess. 1:7-10). Notice the expression "when he comes on that day." This seems to indicate but one coming with a dual purpose to be accomplished "on that day" of his coming.

e. The types which Jesus uses from the old covenant scriptures to illustrate his coming indicate the salvation of the good and the punishment of the evil simultaneously.

One of these concerns Noah and the wicked antediluvians. "They ate, they drank, they married, they were given in marriage, *until the day when Noah entered the ark,* **and the flood came and destroyed them all" (Luke 17:27). "In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month,** *on that day* **all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened . . .** *On the very same day* **Noah . . . entered the ark" (Gen. 7:11-13).**

The other type is that of Lot and the wicked dwellers of Sodom. *"On the day* **when Lot went out from Sodom fire and brimstone rained from heaven and destroyed them all." The next verse says, "So will it be** *on the day* **when the Son of man is revealed" (Luke 17:29, 30).**

In view of all these matters we cannot agree with the premillennial theory as so widely taught in these days. However,

we must face up to Revelation 20, and if the millenarian view is incorrect we should be able to show that it does not correctly explain the chapter. Moreover, we should be able to give a logical explanation thereof. This we shall attempt in our next chapter.

The Thousand Year Reign

Contents

The vision of the seer of Patmos, as described in Revelation 20, logically falls into three parts: the binding of Satan, the throne scene of the martyrs, and the loosing of Satan with the resultant consequences. With reference to the first of these, John describes an angel descending from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. The angel seized him who is called the dragon, the ancient serpent, the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. He threw him into the pit, shut it and sealed it, so its occupant could deceive the nations no more until the expiration of the thousand years. After that he would be freed for a brief period.

In general, we can determine the meaning of this vision. The heavenly messenger held the key to the abyss. A key is a symbol of authority, particularly the authority to open and close (Rev. 3:7). A chain or fetter is a symbol of restraint, or restrictive influence. One who is bound is dispossessed of his freedom to move about as before. The seizing of the dragon is indicative of the exercise of heavenly power over him to curtail his activities. The period in which he was to be thus kept under restraint is specified as a thousand years. It is specifically stated that the purpose of chaining him was to keep him from "deceiving the nations." This indicates that prior to this time he had worked deception over the nations of the earth, but now they would be relatively free from such deception.

With the chaining of Satan, the apostle saw the throne

scene. It would appear that this was related to the binding of the deceiver of nations, and grew out of the circumstance. As Satan was deprived of his power, there were some who were elevated. They were enthroned as he was dethroned. John writes, *"Then* I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom judgment was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their testimony to Jesus and for the word of God, and who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or in their hands. They came to life again, and reigned with Christ a thousand years. The rest of the dead did not come to life again until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and they shall reign with him a thousand years."

This is the only place in the entire word of God where the expression "the first resurrection" occurs. If the doctrine of the millenarians is to be found anywhere, it must be found here. If it is not taught, and clearly taught, in this instance, then it is not taught at all in the revelation of God. In our approach to the problem we must determine who sat upon the thrones, for it was these who took part in the first resurrection. Here the record is plain. John saw *the souls of those* who were beheaded for their testimony to Jesus and the word of God. These were the martyrs who suffered death in behalf of Jesus.

John did not see their bodies. The bodies were decapitated. He saw their souls. We are aware that the objection is made that the word "soul" is sometimes used as equivalent to man, and meaning the whole person. "Eight souls were saved by water." "There were added unto them about three thousand souls." "Joseph called his father Jacob to him, and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls." In each of these the word refers to persons. But while this is so, the expression, *"the souls of* those who had been beheaded" cannot refer to the entire persons, but must refer to the souls in contrast to, and out of, their bodies.

While the term *soul* used alone may, and does, signify a person, the term *soul of* cannot be made to do so by any law of interpretation.

Many interpreters overlook the fact that John had previously seen many of these same souls, but under quite different circumstances. In chapter 6:9-11, he says, "I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne; they cried out with a loud voice, 'O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before thou wilt judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell upon the earth?' Then they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren should be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been."

In this instance the apostle saw the souls of those who had been slain for their testimony. These souls cry out for vindication of their cause and for God's vengeance upon those who had shed their blood. They were each given a white robe as a symbol of their acceptance with God, to reassure them, and they were told to rest a little longer. Vindication or judgment would be granted to them, but first it was requisite that another period of persecution come during which their number *be made complete* by the slaying of another contingent of martyrs. It is not difficult to see that there are two eras of martyrdom.

The implication is that when the first group had died for the faith, there was a lull in persecution and a partial victory was achieved which led the martyred ones to conclude that the cause for which they had shed their blood was ready for final vindication. But they were informed that the victory was not yet complete and another series of persecutions would be required before their number could be made complete. The revelation would not be complete without depicting the final triumph of these slain martyrs. Accordingly, when we arrive at chapter 20 we see the great enemy bound, and the martyred saints upon

thrones. Their number has been completed and now judgment *(krima,* the vindication of one's right) has been granted unto them.

It remains for us to enquire if there were any circumstances in the treatment of the primitive Christians which accord with these facts. The careful student of history will immediately recognize that there are. Be it remembered that Daniel saw four wild beasts, representative of as many successive world powers which were to act as persecuting agencies against God's people. The first three of these are described in the old covenant scriptures, but it was under the fourth that the kingdom of heaven was to be set up. Therefore, it remained for the new covenant scriptures to complete the canon of revelation and to detail the struggle of spiritual Israel under the last great world power. It was to complete this picture that John was granted the vision on Patmos.

The last of the four world powers was Rome, and it was with this nation that Christianity came to grips. The gospel of the Messiah was in direct opposition to the "emperor worship" which was the rallying ground of paganism. Rome soon recognized that she was up against an opponent such as she had never before met. She fought back with all that she had. She used the sword, rack, stake, strangling cord and banishment. The blood of thousands of saints flowed like rivers from the days of Nero to Diocletian. But it was a losing battle, and when Diocletian abdicated the throne in 305, due to his wretched health and desire for rural retirement, and Constantius Chlorus died a year later, the latter nominated his son, Constantine, as successor, and this was ratified by the army. Constantine, being favorable to Christianity, issued an edict of toleration, and the pagan persecutions were over.

When Roman imperialism was finally ended before the onrushing Teutonic hordes, it appeared that the people of God had gained the victory over the fourth beast. At such a time the

souls of the beheaded ones might be expected to cry out with a loud voice for vindication and triumph. But they did not know that the last world empire would manifest itself in two parts. "One of its heads seemed to have a mortal wound, but its mortal wound was healed, and the whole earth followed the beast with wonder" (Rev. 13:3). "It was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. And authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation, and all who dwell on earth shall worship it, every one whose name has not been written before the foundations of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that was slain."

The ferocity of Pagan Rome was manifest anew and increased under the sway of Papal Rome. The infidel historian, Gibbon, estimates the number of Christians slain by Pagan Rome as less than 100,000, but the number of Protestants slain in the Netherlands in five years (1550-55) by the Roman Catholic Emperor Charles V was in excess of that figure. The sword of Pagan Rome gleamed again in the hands of Papal delegates, and once more the blood of witnesses flowed in a stream. The souls under the altar who had rested a little while were now joined by their fellow servants and brethren until the number was complete of those "who were to be killed as they themselves had been."

But the days of the universal sway of Papal Rome were also numbered. In 1324 was born John Wycliffe, the "morning star of the Reformation." He developed into a man of intense conviction who was possessed of a genial and humble spirit, and who lived a pure but austere life. He was described as "the unsparing assailant of abuses, the boldest and most indefatigable of controversialists, the first reformer who dared, when deserted and alone, to question and deny the creed of the Christendom around him, to break through the tradition of the past, and, with his last breath, to assert the freedom of religious thought against the dogmas of the papacy." Wycliffe kindled a fire which was never extinguished. His most important task was the translation

of the Bible into English from the Latin Vulgate, a work which he completed in 1384, the year of his death. His enemies soon admitted that "laymen and even women know more of the Scriptures than the best educated of the clergy."

A quotation from J. J. Blunt is in order at this time. "An eager appetite for scriptural knowledge was excited among the people, which they would make any sacrifice and risk any danger to gratify. Entire copies of the Bible, when they could only be multiplied by the use of amanuenses, were too costly to be within reach of very many readers; but those who could not procure 'the volume of the book' would give a load of hay for a few favorite chapters, and many such scraps were consumed upon the persons of the martyrs at the stake. They would hide the forbidden treasure under the floors of their houses, and put their lives in peril rather than forego the book they desired; they would sit up at night, sometimes all night long, their doors being shut for fear of surprise, reading or hearing others read the word of God; they would bury themselves in the woods, and there converse with it in solitude; they would tend their herds in the fields, and still steal an hour for drinking in the good tidings of great joy."

The free circulation of God's truth was the chain which bound Satan. When the Bible was chained to the pulpits, Satan was free; when the Bible was free, Satan was chained. The Reformation broke the power of Papal dominion and set the captives free from Babylon's long enslavement. Now those who had died for the freedom of truth lived again in the exaltation and triumph over the forces that had killed them. This was not a resurrection of bodies, but of a cause, and those who died for it lived once more in the spirits of free men who were willing to die. But will this interpretation meet the demands of logic and fairness? Let us see!

The book of Revelation is presented in four divisions. The first consists of a vision of the Christ, a detailed description of

his appearance, and his commission to John to write. This occupies the first chapter of the narrative. The second consists of letters addressed to the seven messengers from the congregations of Asia Minor, and these are contained in chapters 2 and 3. The third and fourth divisions each picture history from apostolic days until the culmination of world events at the final judgment. The third division depicts the fate of the Roman Empire, the last of the four great powers of the earth. It opens with a vision of the throne scene in heaven (chapter 4:1) and closes with the sound of the seventh and last trumpet, the judgment of the dead, the rewarding of the saints, and the destruction of the destroyers of the earth (11:15-18). If the book concluded at that point world history would be complete.

However, the fourth division covers the same ground, but with a different view in mind. The third division is dedicated to showing the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, last of the four great world monarchies; but the last half of the book is given over to the rise and triumph of the kingdom of the Messiah. Chapter 20 is near the close of that account. It is not an isolated record of a special purpose to set up a kingdom on earth, but is directly connected with the history of a kingdom set up in the days of John (1:6; 5:10).

The final series of visions begins in chapter 11:19 with a view into heaven, as the preceding series began. In 12:1 John mentions seeing a woman, representative of the church. She is clothed with the sun, symbolic of the light of the gospel; standing over the moon, symbolic of the old covenant as an inferior revelation; having a crown of twelve stars, the chosen envoys or apostles. The woman is in the advanced stages of pregnancy, ready to be delivered. Before her stood a great red dragon (bloody persecuting power) ready to devour her child at birth. She brought forth a male child who was caught up unto God and his throne. The woman fled into the wilderness where she was pursued by the dragon. She was given two wings of a great eagle to enable her to escape, but the dragon ejected water from his

mouth like a river in an attempt to overwhelm her. When the earth opened and engulfed the flood, the dragon was enraged against the woman and went to make war on the rest of her offspring who keep the commandments of God and bear testimony to Jesus.

The dragon is identified as the ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world (12:9). This is the same being that is bound with the chain in 20:1-4 that he should deceive the nations no more. It is not to be understood that Satan attacked the woman in person. The dragon with seven heads and ten horns is symbolic of Rome, the last of the world empires. The key to the entire series is found in the expression, "The dragon was angry with the woman, and went off to make war with the remnant of her offspring." The woman's offspring are identified as those who keep the commandments of God and bear testimony to Jesus. Thus we have a history of war between two great opposing forces— the church and the party of the dragon. One is Christian, the other is anti-Christian. The church is represented by faithful witnesses who stand for truth through many centuries. The witnesses are not the same persons throughout the centuries, but they belong to the same institution, and form the same party, and therefore, they may be said to be cast down or lifted up, falling or rising, as the party is activated or quiescent, overthrown or in the ascendancy.

The offspring of the woman in conflict with the forces of the dragon pass through various conditions in the prolonged war. Thus we come to chapter 19, and John says, "I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who sits upon the horse and against his army" (verse 19). This is the dragon-party arrayed for a decisive struggle against the forces of the Christ. The result is that the beast and false prophet were captured and thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with brimstone. "And *the rest* were slain by the sword of him who sits upon the horse, the sword that

issues from his mouth" (19:21). Notice that the effective instrument is the sword of the Spirit, that is, the word of God. With it, the forces of the dragon-party are routed and decimated.

When the word of God overcomes the rest of the dragon-party, John immediately says, *"Then* I saw an angel coming down from heaven . . . and he seized the dragon . . . and bound him for a thousand years . . . that he should deceive the nations no more." With the dragon under chains to keep him from deceiving the nations of earth, the truth-party was now in possession of the field, and John saw the souls of those who died for the sake of truth, on thrones. So long had truth been obscured by the darkness of error that it was actually like a resurrection from the dead for it to once more have the ascendancy. When the dragon had the nations deceived, the word of God chained to the pulpits, and the church was in the wilderness, the faithful were being slaughtered and truth was hidden. Now, with the enemy of souls imprisoned, and the word of God free, the truth-party is on thrones and victory is apparent. Those who died for the cause of the Christ live again as truth survives and triumphs upon earth in the persons of their successors. This is the first resurrection, the vindication of the cause of truth for which thousands were beheaded.

"The rest of the dead did not come to life again until the thousand years were finished." Who are these? Please observe that "when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be loosed from his prison and will come out to deceive the nations which are at the four corners of the earth." This indicates a resurrection of the dragon-party. While truth is free, universal deception is not likely, but the day will come when Satan is loosed. The dragon-party will then be in power for a little season which will culminate in the final struggle of truth against error, called the battle of Har-Megiddo (Armageddon). The first resurrection is the triumph of the party of truth when the martyrs live again in the persons of those who espouse it; the

next resurrection is the temporary triumph of the forces of error and apostacy in the persons of those who revive deception and fraud with its persecuting tendencies. It is interesting to note that the word "rest" in "the *rest* of the dead" (20:5) is the same as in "the *rest* were slain by the sword of him who sits upon the house" (19:21).

Is this idea of a figurative or symbolic resurrection a forced one in the chapter? Does it wreak havoc with the context, either remote or adjacent? On the contrary. This interpretation does no injury to the text. It coincides with the remainder of the book and is maintained by the facts of history. The idea of two literal resurrections, one of the righteous, another of the wicked a thousand years later, has to be injected to sustain a theory. It denies other plain texts of scripture. It must supply by supposition essential parts of the theory which are lacking from the revelation of God.

Is there scriptural precedent for interpretation of a rising cause as "a resurrection"? Is it logical to refer to those who have died in behalf of a principle as "living again" in the persons of those who adopt that principle after it has long been buried from sight? In other words, can there be such a thing as a metaphorical resurrection? To this we reply that the word of God abounds in such illustrations. The prophet Isaiah brought comfort to Israel with reference to their captivity by saying, "Thy dead shall live, their bodies shall rise. O dwellers in the dust, awake and sing for joy!" (26:19). When the nation was in captivity in Babylon, with Jerusalem torn down and the temple destroyed, the people of Israel declared, "Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost, we are clean cut off." But the Lord said, "Behold, I will open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you home again to the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people" (Ezek. 37:11-15). This does not mean that God proposed to literally raise from the dead those who died in the siege of

Jerusalem, or those who perished in Babylon. But a remnant returned with Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah, rebuilt Jerusalem and the temple, and restored the law. This was a resurrection of national hopes and aspirations from the graves of despondency and despair.

That there is such a thing as a figurative resurrection is plainly evidenced by the writer of the Hebrews (11:17-19): "By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was ready to offer up his only son, of whom it was said, 'Through Isaac shall your descendants be named.' He considered that God was able to raise men even from the dead, hence, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back."

In Romans 11, the apostle Paul deals at length with the present state of the Jews. He shows that as branches of an olive tree they were broken off because of unbelief in order that the Gentiles might be grafted in. By their trespass salvation came to the Gentiles so as to make Israel jealous. If they do not persist in their unbelief, they will be grafted in again, for God is able to do this. The writer asks, "For if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead?" (verse 15). Their rejection is equivalent to death, their acceptance to life. Since they are now in a state of rejection, if they return to God's favor it will be a resurrection from the dead.

For one to come in the same spirit and power as another is as if the original person came. Malachi wrote, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes" (4:5). The Jewish scribes accepted this literally and looked for Elijah to come personally (Matt. 17:10). But Jesus said, "I tell you that Elijah has already come, and they did not know him, but did to him whatever they pleased . . . Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them of John the Baptist" (Matt. 17:12, 13). In what sense had Elijah come in

the person of John? The answer is found in the words of Gabriel, relative to John. "He will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just" (Luke 1:17). Elijah "lived again" when one came in his same spirit and power.

In this same sense the slain martyrs lived again when others arose in their spirit and power, contending boldly for the same truth for which they gave their lives. It was not necessary for the martyrs to return to earth any more than it was necessary for Elijah to do so. Jesus said "Elijah has already come" and in just the same way the slain martyrs lived again. The scribes looked for Elijah and did not recognize him when he came. They did not see him return personally and concluded that he had not come. In the same way modern scribes look for a literal millennium and may not recognize it when it is here. Because they do not see the "bodies" of the martyrs, they conclude their "souls" are not reigning with the Christ.

The reformers who died for the faith seemed to feel what I am now expressing. We offer as an example, John Huss, who was born in Hussenitz, Bohemia, in 1380. After graduation from the university at Prague, he became a bold contender for the truth. He strongly advocated the doctrine of Wycliffe, and was cited to appear before the general council in Constance, Germany, and answer to a charge of heresy. In spite of a document granting safe conduct, issued by the emperor, the pope, on the basis that "Faith is not to be kept with heretics," had him arrested and thrown into prison upon his arrival in Constance.

When Huss was brought before the council, approximately forty charges and indictments were launched against him. At the close of his trial a resolution was made to burn him as a heretic if he did not recant. He was cast into a filthy prison, and laden with fetters so that he could barely move. At night his hands

were chained to a ring in the wall. When four bishops and two lords were sent to urge his recantation upon the basis of the wisdom of the council, Huss said, "Let them send the meanest person of that council, who can convince me by argument from the word of God, and I will submit my judgment to him." When the chain was put about him at the stake, he said, "My Lord Jesus Christ was bound with a harder chain than this for my sake; why, then, should I be ashamed of this old rusty one?" As the wood for the fire was being piled about his feet, the duke of Bavaria again tried to get him to renounce his teaching. Huss replied, "No, I never preached any doctrine of evil tendency; and what I taught with my lips I now seal with my blood."

While still in the prison, Huss made a very significant statement, as follows, "I maintain this for certain, that the image of Christ will never be effaced. They have wished to destroy it, but it shall be painted afresh in all hearts by much better preachers than myself. The nation that loves Christ will rejoice at this; and I awaking among the dead, and rising, so to speak, from my grave, shall leap with great joy." A century later Martin Luther shook the structure of Papacy to its foundations in Germany where Huss was burnt. Pope Adrian, in his letter to the Diet of Nuremberg, wrote: "The heretics Huss and Jerome are *alive again* **in the person of Martin Luther." "They** *came to life again,* **and reigned with Christ a thousand years" (Rev. 20:4).**

We view the millennium as a period of free circulation of the truth throughout the earth. It is not inaugurated by a literal resurrection of any from the grave, but by the rising of a cause which had been buried beneath a mixture of unholy superstition and tradition. It will continue while freedom of thought and speech are allowed by nations no longer under the deception of an apostate hierarchy. It will be concluded when men no longer cherish these ideals and again allow the forces of evil to throttle them. Then will be resurrected the deceptive spirit which for "a little season" will lead the nations of the earth into captivity.

We visualize the teaching with reference to this chapter as follows:

1. *First resurrection.* **The revival of the party of truth and the rescue of the church from "the wilderness" of obscurity, into which it has been driven by fierce opposition of Satan's forces.**

2. *Second resurrection.* **The revival of Satan's party consequent upon his release from the abyss and their return to power at the end of a thousand years. Following the deception of the nations during a little season, the devil will be thrown into the lake of fire, and then will occur the universal resurrection of the just and unjust at the coming of our Lord. This is the prelude for the event described in Revelation 20:11-15, when John saw "the dead, great and small standing before the throne . . . and all were judged by what they had done."**

Before we conclude, this chapter we beg permission to append a dissertation which we believe will serve for clarification. We refer to the article by Alexander Campbell on "The Resurrection of the Dead and the Pre-millenial Resurrection." We ask of our readers a careful study of the exegesis prepared by this profound student of the word of God.

> **That we may be understood in the contrast between the literal and figurative resurrection, we shall call the former *the resurrection of the body* and the latter *the pre-millenial resurrection.***
>
> **Nicodemus was a great literalist when he asked. How can a grown man be born again? As great literalists, perhaps, may they be found who take *"the first resurrection"* of the apocalyptic visions, to be a literal one.**
>
> **We have a minute account of a figurative resurrection of the house of Israel by the Prophet Ezekiel. The Lord "opened the graves" and raised from the valley of "dry bones" a living and puissant army. That was a figurative resurrection. In baptism we are both buried and**

raised with Christ— planted in the similitude of his death, to be raised in the similitude of his resurrection.

The restoration of Israel in Romans 11 is by Paul called "life from the dead." "Since you have been raised with Christ, ascend in your affections," is a part of the beautiful imagery of Paul to the Colossians. If there were two Elijahs, one literal and one figurative, we need not wonder that there should be two resurrections— a figurative and a literal one. Now in the book of types and symbols the presumption is in favor of a metaphorical resurrection, unless something be connected with it that precludes the possibility or probability of such an appropriation.

When any cause is almost or altogether dead, whether it be good or bad, should it suddenly or unexpectedly revive, we would with Paul think of "life from the dead," or with John call it a resurrection. Nay, it may yet appear that John has a first and second figurative resurrection— one before and one after his thousand years; for if, after a long prostrate, dispirited, and ineffectual profession of the faith, a great and unprecedented revival should take place, and a prophet should call it a resurrection, might he not, at the end of that great revival or resurrection of the good spirits of the olden time, when an opposite class began to rise into power, think of another resurrection, which in contrast he would call a second resurrection? This John virtually does by calling one of them a first resurrection; and by afterwards speaking of the *"rest of the dead"* living again. Whether I have the true secret of interpreting the Apocalypse (chapter 20) the following antithesis may in part demonstrate. We shall only add that while a literal resurrection has respect to the body dead and buried, a figurative resurrection in the Christian religion will not indicate *bodies,* but *souls* quickened, animated, and elevated by the Spirit of God. And that as in the same treatise John speaks of the death, and of "the spirit of life" re-animating and elevating to heaven the two witnesses,

the presumption is that he is as figurative in the 20th as he was in the 14th chapter of his scenetic and symbolic representations.

1. ***The resurrection of the body is only a resurrection of the body; whereas the pre-millenial resurrection is a resurrection of souls, and not of bodies.*** **"I saw the souls of the beheaded," says John, "and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. This is the first resurrection." Now of the body Paul says, "It is sown a natural body and raised a spiritual body— it is sown a corruptible body and raised an incorruptible." The pre-millenial resurrection** ***is a raising of souls.***

2. ***The resurrection of the body is general— the pre-millenial is special.*** **"All that are in the graves shall hear his voice and come forth." "There shall be a resurrection of the just and unjust." These with other passages of the same significance, apply to the resurrection of the dead, as all admit. But in the account of the pre-millenial resurrection only some will participate in it: for, says John, "I saw the souls of them beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and whosoever had not worshiped the beast nor his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."**

3. ***The resurrection of the body will be accompanied with the transformation of all the living saints — the pre-millenial will not.***

No one pretends that all the living saints will be changed when the first resurrection (as it is called) transpires; and no one can deny that Paul says both the living saints shall be changed and the dead raised, and both ascend together to meet the Lord in the air.

4. ***The participants of the resurrection of the saints will live and reign for ever; while the participants of the pre-millenial resurrection are only to live and reign one***

thousand years.

I need not prove that the phrase, "we shall be ever with the Lord," applies to the subjects of the *"resurrection of the just,"* nor need I prove that the limitation of the life and triumphs of the saints to one thousand years, precludes the idea of its being an eternal life and endless reign.

5. ***The resurrection of the body, its transformation and that of the earth, are almost coincident events: while the pre-millenial resurrection is neither accompanied nor succeeded by any such transformations; nay, it is to be succeeded by another resurrection of the souls of the wicked, called "the rest of the dead."***

"The rest of the dead lived not again till the thousand years were expired." Now as the phrase, "they lived a thousand years," intimates that in that sense and state they lived no more than a thousand years; so the phrase, "the rest of the dead lived not again till the thousand years were expired," intimates that as soon as the thousand years were expired they lived again.

6. ***The resurrection of the dead immediately precedes the destruction of the last enemy; but the pre-millenial resurrection leaves not only Satan, but death in the field, to gain new triumphs, more than one thousand years after its consummation.***

So far from death, the last enemy, being destroyed before the Millennium— so far from Satan being for ever crushed by the first resurrection, it is intimated that he will be loosed, and that he will deceive the nations and raise a war against the saints even after the thousand years shall have been fulfilled. Can any man reconcile this with Paul's affirmation while expatiating on the resurrection of the dead? "Death the last enemy, shall be destroyed." "Death is swallowed up for ever." "Grave, where now thy victory!"

7. ***It was before shown that the final conflagration and the new creation of a heaven and earth more congenial with the new bodies of the saints, will immediately accompany the resurrection of the body; while the pre-millenial resurrection indicates a residence on the present earth for a thousand years after it is burned up!***

These seven specifications of antitheses between the literal and figurative resurrections, may suffice for the present. There are other points that have occurred to us besides these; but these, we presume, incontrovertibly show that the Lord cannot possibly come in person before the Millennium; and that with me, at present, is all that I wish to establish. The events that do accompany, and those that must, according to the very plainest oracles, precede his personal return, are such as forbid any one well read, or profoundly attentive to the subject, to believe or teach the personal coming of the Lord, or a literal resurrection of any portion of the saints, before the Millennium.

Acknowledgment

The author wishes to acknowledge his special indebtedness to David King, whose writings were of great worth in formulating the convictions expressed in this chapter. This saintly man was born in Clerkenwell, London, on February 28, 1819, and died at Birmingham, June 26, 1894. A part of the inscription on his monument reads: "Rejecting all human creeds, he pleaded that the teaching of Christ and His apostles is the only divinely authorized and all-sufficient way of salvation and basis of Christian union." To the brethren now living in Great Britain, and especially to our aged brother, Walter Crosthwaite, of Ulverston, Lancashire, we express deep appreciation, for the willingness to share with us the bound copies of Christian periodicals, now out of print, which have been of great service.

Maranatha

Contents

The word "maranatha" means "The Lord is coming." It is believed by many students that it was a greeting or salutation used by the primitive disciples of the Messiah. When they met on the street, in the market, or in their homes, this was the watchword. The uninitiated pagan who heard would not know its significance, but to the followers of the Messiah it set forth the real foundation of that hope which sustained them in the midst of a heedless society. Perhaps most of the ills attendant upon modern Christendom stem from the loss of that vibrant expectation with which the saints of old comforted each other. To the true believer, the coming of the Lord is a precious promise. The Christocracy is an interim rule to be culminated with the return of the Messiah. The plan of the ages cannot be completed without this capsheaf upon the harvest of the earth.

1. We have the testimony of Jesus that he is coming again. "And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also" (John 14:3).

2. We have the testimony of angels. "And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven" (Acts 1:10, 11).

3. The apostle Paul wrote. "But our commonwealth is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power which enables him to subject all things unto himself" (Phil. 3:20, 21).

4. The apostle Peter wrote, "What sort of persons ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God" (2 Pet. 3:11, 12).

5. James exhorts his readers, "Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord" (5:7).

6. Jude wrote, "But you, beloved, build yourselves up on your most holy faith; pray in the Holy Spirit; keep yourselves in the love of God; wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (20:21).

7. John sealed the revelation of heaven with the words, "He who testifies to these things says, 'Surely I am coming soon.' Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!" (Rev. 22:20).

What circumstances will attend the coming of our Lord? What will it be like on that great and notable day for which all other days have been made? Again we must proceed with caution, for the information afforded is prophetic, and it is dangerous to become dogmatic about unfulfilled prophecy. The path of history is strewn with the wrecks of theories which once gained credence and seemed impossible of failure. But to proceed with caution does not imply refusal to proceed at all, and as we wend our way carefully amidst the truths revealed, we can be safe if we allow them to enlighten our minds and do not try to shape them by our minds. We must recognize the difference between revelation and speculation.

It would seem that a proper place to begin our survey is with the words of Peter, recorded in Acts 3:19-21. "Repent

therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, whom heaven must receive until the time for establishing all that God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old." The King James Version has "He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you, whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."

An analysis of this momentous declaration reveals four important truths: (1) The Messiah is now in heaven; (2) He must remain there until the times of the restitution of all things; (3) This includes all that was predicted as related to his work by all of the prophets; (4) As the consummating act of all things God will send him forth. The background of this announcement is important. It was included in a speech made on the portico called Solomon's, which was a part of the temple in Jerusalem. The address was made to Israelites whose Messianic hopes led them to believe that a great work would be done on earth in the way of restoration, with Jerusalem as its capital city. They held the view that the righteous saints of other ages would be raised and that the faithful would sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in a thousand years of earthly bliss.

This interpretation of the prophecies was dashed by Peter's words. The Reign of the Messiah would not be on earth but in heaven. The conquest was to be made while he was at the right hand of the Father. His coming from the Father was not to inaugurate but to consummate the Reign. To lend strength to this we cite the words "establishing" and "restitution" which are the English translations by two different versions of the Greek word *apokatastasis.*

This noun form occurs at no other place in the new covenant scriptures. However, there are eight occurrences of the verb from which it is derived. The primary significance of the

verb is "to restore." It has to do with the restoration of a thing to its original state, situation, or condition. In Matthew 12:13 it is used of the curing of a withered, shrunken hand. "And the man stretched it out, and it was restored whole like the other." In Mark 8:25 it is used of the restoration of normal vision to a blind man. "Again he laid his hands upon his eyes; and he looked intently and was restored, and saw everything clearly." This is the term used by the apostles in Acts 1:6 when they asked Jesus, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" Wrapped up in this query was all of the longing engendered by the teaching of the scribes relative to the Messianic Reign upon the throne of David. It remained for one of those who asked the question to announce that the restoration effected by the Messiah would be accomplished in heaven where he must remain until that time.

This affords an opportunity of pointing out the danger and folly of interpreting the words of the apostles of the Messiah by the prophets of the old covenant. This is one of the fatal errors of the pre-millennial school of thought. The revelation in the new covenant is explained in the light of the old covenant, rather than the reverse. The envoys of the Messiah are the only safe and authorized expounders of the ancient prophecies. He opened their minds to understand the scriptures (Luke 24:45) and those things about which the prophets searched and enquired have now been announced by those who preached the good news through the Holy Spirit sent from heaven (1 Peter 1:10-12). Without access to the new covenant scriptures, the Jewish teachers fell into error in interpreting the words of their prophets and concluded the Reign would be on earth; it is a sad thing that many who have access to the new covenant scriptures fall into the same error. The Jewish scribes did so because they sought to interpret their scriptures before their fulfillment; modern scribes do so because they seek to interpret their scriptures by those previously given.

God will send forth Jesus, but not until the times of

restoration of all things. He must remain in heaven until the fulfillment of all the prophets have spoken. The restoration will be accomplished in a heavenly, not an earthly locale. We believe that this is in harmony with the other scriptural references to the Reign. Previously we have referred to the inaugural address of the Father when the Son returned to heaven as a conqueror. The latter was greeted with the invitation, "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool" (Psalm 110:1). He was told that his people would offer themselves freely and that he should reign in the midst of his enemies. That this is his present status is evidenced by the writer of the Hebrew epistle. "When Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, then to wait until his enemies should be made a stool for his feet" (10:12, 13).

What will transpire when the final victory is won and the goal has been achieved? Paul affirms that as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. Then he adds "But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ" (1 Cor. 15:23). The context shows that he is here dealing solely with the resurrection and glorification of the righteous dead. The resurrection of the wicked is not under consideration. He affirms nothing and denies nothing with reference to them. The expression "those who belong to Christ" is not used in contrast with a group who do not belong to him. It is used as complementary to "first fruits." The ones who belong to the Christ will be raised at his coming. What follows that coming? This is the crux of the modern controversy. All are agreed that those who belong to the Christ will be raised at his coming, but what follows? Will it be a thousand year reign on earth, followed by the resurrection of another group?

The record is specific. "Then comes the end." But it is argued that the whole passage says, "Then comes the end when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father." The view of some is that the end does not come when those who belong to Christ are raised, but when he delivers the kingdom to God. The contention

is that a thousand years will elapse between those events, during which the Messiah will resurrect and sit upon the literal throne of David and rule over the whole earth. The word "end" is from *telos,* which signifies termination or finality. The word for "comes" is not in the original at all. For that reason Young's Literal Translation has: "Afterwards those who are the Christ's in his presence, then— the end . . . " If there was to be a glorification and reign of the saints after their resurrection this would seem to be a logical place to introduce it. The theme of this chapter is the hope inspired by the resurrection. If the marvelous things depicted in the millenarian view were a part of the heritage of the saints this would be the appropriate place to mention them. But what says the record? "Then, the end." Regardless of what men may seek to read into the text, these three words seem to bar the way to the elaborate story so freely circulated.

After the resurrection of the saints at the coming of the Christ comes the end "when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power . . . When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things under him, that God may be everything to every one" (1 Cor. 15:24, 28). It would appear that at the time when the theorists declare that the Christ will begin to reign, the inspired writer says he will cease; at the time when they say he will become a monarch, he says that he will become a subject.

It is our conviction that a collation of all the various events which are plainly revealed as occurring at his coming will preclude any great period of time on this earth subsequent thereto. The coming of the Lord is the grand climax of the ages. It is the consummating act of the drama of the world. The divine testimony must be harmonious. Any interpretation which is in conflict with other parts of the sacred revelation must be rejected. What will transpire at the coming of our blessed Lord?

1. *The resurrection of those who belong to the Christ.* **"For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then** *at his coming* **those who belong to the Christ" (1 Cor. 15:22, 23). This will be at the last day. "This is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all he has given me, but raise it up** *at the last day"* **(John 6:39). Now those whom the Father has given to the Christ are those who belong to him. They are the ones who have come to him upon having heard and learned of him. It is by this method the Father draws them to him. "No one can come to me unless the Father which sent me draws him; and I will raise him up** *at the last day"* **(John 6:44). Those who belong to the Christ are those who believe in him. "For this is the will of my Father, that every one who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:40). Regardless of what may be inferred from other passages the teaching here is plain. Those who belong to the Christ will be raised at his coming and that resurrection will be upon the last day. There can be no subsequent period of years following the resurrection of the saints, else they would not be raised on the last day. We must not make our interpretation deny the plain teaching of the word of God.**

2. *The transformation of the living saints.* **The record informs us that there will be some of the faithful alive at the coming of the Lord. But these cannot inherit the kingdom of God in flesh and blood. The nature of the eternal or imperishable state is such that those who participate in it must be in a form adapted to it. In the case of those who are dead, the resurrected form will not be physical or perishable. "What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable . . . It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body." But those who are still alive must undergo a transformation in order that they may conform to the saints who are raised. This will be instantaneous but it will also be simultaneous with the resurrection. The same trumpet sound which arouses the sleeping ones will signal the transformation of those who are alive.**

"We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed." Observe that the trumpet which signals this event is *the last trumpet.* **Repeatedly, the trumpet is referred to as the signal for the resurrection of the dead. But the righteous dead will be raised and the righteous living be changed at the sound of the last trumpet. If there are still some asleep after the righteous dead are raised, it is obvious that they will have to be raised without a trumpet. The signal for a resurrection will not be given to them, for no trumpet can be blown after** *the last one!*

We are aware of the quibble that is sometimes made that the same trumpet can be sounded more than once, but in reply we point out that it is the sounding of the trumpet in this case which is the last trumpet. The reading is: "At the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound and the dead will be raised." Since the Revelation letter is the choice hunting ground of the theorists, we suggest that they take note of the fact that John beheld "the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them" (8:2). As he watched he saw that "the seven angels who had the seven trumpets made ready to blow them" (8:6). The number "seven" was a symbol of completeness or perfection. Since the trumpets announced and ushered in great epochs in the divine plan of the ages, we would expect that the sounding of the seventh, or last, would culminate that plan.

Let us see if this is correct. "Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were voices in heaven, saying, 'The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever.' And the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces, and they worshiped God, saying, 'We give thanks to thee, Lord God almighty, who art and who wast, that thou hast taken thy great power and begun to reign. The nations raged,

but thy wrath came, and the time for the dead to be judged, for rewarding thy servants, the prophets and saints, and those who fear thy name, both small and great, and for destroying the destroyers of the earth" (Rev. 11:15-18). The seventh trumpet was the last one. It signaled the completion of the conquest of the Messiah, for the kingdom of the world had been subjugated. It also ushered in the day of God's wrath, the time of judgment of the dead, the rewarding of the saints, and the destruction of the destroyers. This seems conclusive proof that there can be no period of a thousand years followed by another resurrection after the sounding of "the last trumpet."

3. *The removal of those who are resurrected and those who are changed from the earth.* **The congregation at Thessalonica was troubled in mind relative to those who had died. There is some indication that they contemplated the imminent return of Jesus, and they were concerned as to the fate of those who died in advance of that return. Their fear seems to have been manifested in two particulars. Would those who died before the Messiah returned be brought back to life, and if so, would this occur after the living saints had gone to meet him? In his handling of the situation, the apostle allays both fears. "But we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep." That answered the first question and restored hope on behalf of the dead and dying.**

"For this we declare unto you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the archangel's call, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first; then we who are alive, who are left, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so we shall always be with the

Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words" (1 Thess. 4:13-18).

This language is plain. Those resurrected from the dead, and those who are changed, are not to remain on this earth. They will leave it to meet the Lord. The Lord is not coming to this earth. He will descend from heaven and those who are his will ascend from the earth. Their meeting is not on earth at all. It is in the air. But a question may be asked concerning the expression, "The dead in Christ shall rise first." This has no reference to the dead in Christ as contrasted with the dead *out of Christ.* **The latter are not under consideration by the apostle. He is comforting the saints with reference to the faithful dead. Whatever the fate or disposition of those may be who are not in Christ, that forms no part of this discussion.**

The thing that troubled the Thessalonians was not whether the righteous or wicked dead would have priority in the resurrection, but whether the living righteous would be caught up before the resurrection of the righteous dead. In replying to this anxious question the apostle says that the living will not precede the dead, but rather, the dead in Christ shall rise first, that is, before the living are caught up. It is not the dead *in Christ* **as contrasted with those out of Christ, but** *the dead* **in Christ as contrasted with the living.**

4. *The destruction of the unbelieving and disobedient.* **The apostle makes an argument in Romans, chapter two, which ought to be here considered. In the latter part of the first chapter he demonstrates that the philosophy of the Gentiles, by its ignoring of God, led to degradation and despair. In chapter two, he proves that the Jew who trusted in his legalism, is equally without excuse, and in the first sixteen verses he deals with the judgment of God. That judgment will rightly fall upon all who judge others while doing what they condemn, and they cannot escape it (verses 2, 3). There are two classes of persons who will face God** *"on the day* **when God's righteous judgment will be**

revealed." "Those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; but for those who are factious and do not obey the truth, but obey wickedness, there will be wrath and fury." This would have been an excellent place for the apostle to have inserted the teaching relative to the prior glory and honor of the saints, but instead of implying that there will be a thousand year period between the beginning of the glorification of the saints and the destruction of the unbelieving, he rather asserts it will take place *"on that day* **when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus" (2:16).**

This coincides with the amplification provided in 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10. Here the subject is the persecution and affliction to which the saints are being subjected. An unparalleled opportunity was afforded to set forth the theory of the pre-millennial coming of the Lord and the reign of the righteous on earth. The apostle sought to comfort those who were distressed and persecuted because of their fidelity to God. But he wrote not one word about an earthly reign with Jesus while the wicked remained in their graves. Instead, he specifically states that the glorification of the saints and the destruction of the wicked will transpire on the same day, and that at the coming of the Christ.

"Indeed God deems it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to grant rest with us to you who are afflicted, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance upon those who do not know God and upon those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They shall suffer the punishment of eternal destruction and exclusion from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, *when he comes on that day* **to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at in all who have believed." This clearly teaches that Jesus will grant rest to the persecuted, be glorified in his saints, and marveled at by all believers, at the same time he inflicts vengeance, destruction and**

exclusion upon the disobedient. This will be *when he comes!* **It will all be** *on that day!* **In the face of such evidence it is difficult to see how such an elaborate theory as the one under review could have originated.**

5. *The burning up of the earth and the passing away of the heavens.* **The inspired record clearly teaches in unmistakable language that the heavens and earth which now exist have been reserved for destruction by fire, and that this will be accomplished at the coming of the Lord. The terms used are such as to indicate a dissolution and demolition of the present order of creation. "By the same word the heavens and earth that now exist have been stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men" (2 Peter 3:7). The heavens and the earth that now exist are identified as the ones created by the word of God "long ago" (verse 5). They are doomed to depart. In affirming the imperishable character of his words, Jesus also affirmed the certainty of the passing of the material sphere. "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away" (Mark 13:31). One might as well deny the eternal existence of the word as to affirm the eternal perpetuity of the heavens and earth created by it.**

The Father said to the Son, "Thou, Lord, didst found the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of thy hands; they will perish, but thou remainest; they will all grow old like a garment, like a mantle thou wilt roll them up, and they will be changed. But thou art the same, and thy years will never end" (Heb. 1:10-12). Here the contrast is between the creator and the created. The point of difference is that while the former remains, the latter will be destroyed, or perish. The heavens and earth sustain the same relationship to the Lord, as a cloak or mantle to one who makes it for his comfort or convenience. It is understood that a garment will no longer serve its purpose when it grows old, and it is then discarded or cast aside. The heavens and earth are material in nature and have been created for man in a material state. When that state is changed, the present order

of creation will be outgrown and outmoded. The heavens and earth will then be rejected as unnecessary and useless. The Lord is the same. He does not grow old and his years will never end. But the earth does grow old as God's purpose for it nears completion, and there will be an end of its years.

The writer of Hebrews also draws a contrast between the scene which inaugurated the first covenant and that which will culminate the second. He writes, "His voice then shook the earth; but now he has promised, 'Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heaven.' This phrase, 'Yet once more,' indicates the removal of what is shaken, as of what has been made, in order that what cannot be shaken may remain." God has plainly declared he will shake the earth and heaven. He has said he would do it but once more. This implies the removal of what will be shaken. Previously his voice shook but part of the created universe; the next time the whole earth will be shaken, and removed. It will not be here to be shaken again after that.

The heavens and the earth were made. They were made by the word of God. They are now stored up for fire by the same word. The term "stored up" is from *thesaurizo,* **which means to treasure up or reserve for future design or use. The design in this instance is destruction by fire. The heavens and earth are being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. There is not a hint that the earth is reserved for a dwelling of the righteous, nor that it will be the abode of the Savior and the resurrected saints during a millennium. It is not being reserved as a dwelling of the good; but it is kept for destruction because of ungodly men. Surely if this earth was destined for a glorious state and was being perpetuated with that intent or design, the apostle Peter would have embraced the opportunity provided for saying so. Instead, he makes no reference to any such purpose but declares that the earth is being kept in store for destruction in the day of judgment.**

"The day of the Lord will come as a thief, and then the

heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and the works that are upon it will be burned up." The expressions "pass away," "dissolved," and "burned up" certainly are opposed to the idea of continuance. Any speculation which includes the perpetuity of the existing material realm after the coming of the Lord does injury to the revelation of God through the Spirit. The term "elements" is one which designates the primary and minute portions out of which complex and compound structures grow. In all ages and times, men have recognized that the world about them was made up of primary and simple elements. It is true that when Peter wrote, there was not the advanced scientific research or knowledge which enabled men to "crack the atom" but this was not essential to an understanding of his writing. Regardless of what men conceive as being the elements out of which the material universe is formed, those elements will be dissolved by universal conflagration.

Since all the material creation is made up of elements, the dissolving of these will signal the burning up of the earth and all that pertains to it. God made the earth from simple elements. Men have arranged the products of earth in various forms, shapes and structures. These constitute the works of the earth. They are of the earth, from the earth, and on the earth. That which God created and that which man has made will alike be burned with fire. There will be "a removal of the things that are made."

Let us summarize and see just what is to take place at the coming of our Lord. If, in such recapitulating, we find no provision for an extended reign of resurrected saints on earth, or if we find that a theory of such reign would deny or disarrange what the word of God teaches, we may be relatively certain it is not a part of "the plan of the ages." We have found that at the coming of the Christ the ones who are asleep in Jesus will be raised, those who remain on earth will be changed, both will be caught up from the earth to meet the Lord, the wicked and

disobedient will be punished with everlasting destruction, the heavens will pass away with a great noise while the earth and all the works that are therein will be burned up. These are plain truths positively stated. Any idea which ignores them or denies them is a denial of the very language of the Holy Spirit.

But we are asked what we propose to do with Ecclesiastes 1:4, which states, "A generation goes, and a generation comes, but *the earth remains for ever."* **The problem is no greater for us than for those who interpret the passage to mean that the earth will not pass away, for they must then meet the positive statement of Jesus that it will do so. It should be no more difficult for us to explain how a thing can be created after another is burned up and dissolved, than for exponents of the opposing view to explain how that which is burned up and dissolved may still remain. However, the crux of the matter lies in the definition of the word "for ever."**

This is from the Hebrew *olam* **which means "age lasting" or "through the age." The duration implied in any given place is limited to the age under consideration, and this must always be determined by the contextual usage. In Ecclesiastes 1:4 the contrast is not between the perpetual existence or destruction of the earth, but between the brevity of life of a generation of men and the duration of the earth. "A generation goes, and a generation comes, but the earth remains for ever" It does not come and go with the generations of men who inhabit it. The age, then, is that during which men will be born, and the earth will continue only so long as the generations of men are born and die. There is no contradiction with the passage which declares that the earth will be burned up, for the time of final conflagration will mark the end of successive generations.**

What will constitute the realm of the kingdom of God when the earth and its works are burned up? Of this we are not left in ignorance. "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth

righteousness" (2 Peter 3:13). An analysis of this passage shows there are three specific points: (1) There will be a new heavens and a new earth; (2) This is according to promise; (3) The new creation will be a dwelling place of holiness. As to the first of these, we are fully aware of the arguments made in favor of a renovation of the present order, but they are such as would not ordinarily occur to the humble student who had no prior theory to sustain. The language employed indicates an abolition of the existing order or state in all of its phases, and the creation of a wholly new order of things. To this the apocalyptic writer gives strength with his statement, "I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea" (Rev. 21:1).

There are two heavens and two earths mentioned here. One is designated as "the first," the other as "new." The former will pass away in order that the other may come into existence. At the time when John wrote this, he was standing upon the "first earth" but was permitted a view of the distant future when he could see a new earth. If it was the same earth upon which he then stood, merely purged and purified, it is unlikely that he would describe it as "a new earth," or use the expression "the first earth" for the one upon which he then resided. The scriptural import of the expressions "new" and "first" when used in conjunction may be found in Hebrews 8:13, "In that he saith, A new . . . he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away."

The present earth was created for man in his present state. It was first created and the body of man was then made from it. When he dies his body returns to the earth from which he was taken, and becomes a part of it. A physical earth is adapted to physical men. When men no longer possess physical bodies they cannot dwell on a natural earth. "As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy, and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly" (1 Cor. 15:48). The present earth was created for man made from it, and for all who bear the image of that

man. A change in image will require a change in nature of the residence. "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly" (1 Cor. 15:49).

This is the very reason that a change is required. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption" (1 Cor. 15:50). The argument that the earth will be purified of the effects of sin and restored to its original state, and that men will dwell upon it as Adam did before the fall, breaks down at this point. Adam was flesh and blood before he sinned. "The first man is of the earth." The heirs of the kingdom of God will not be flesh and blood. They will be no more adapted to a life like that in Eden than would other celestial beings. It is for this reason we conclude that when the Messianic reign is succeeded by the unbroken theocracy, the citizens will have a completely new creation as their realm or habitat.

We look for such a state, says Peter, according to promise. It is no doubt that the apostle here refers to such passages as are found in Isaiah 65:17; 66:22. The fact that these may have a two-fold meaning and application in no sense militates against the use which he makes of them. In the new heavens and the new earth holiness will dwell unmarred. "There shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie" (Rev. 21:27). "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 6:9, 10).

Those who accept the sovereignty of Jesus, the Messiah, over their hearts and lives, are in the kingdom of God; yet they have an even more glorious state awaiting them. The purposes of God are ever unfolding in majesty and power. As children we are heirs. A rich heritage lies just beyond. We enter the present

state of the kingdom through faith, and upon that foundation we are expected to construct a character consonant with the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. The stones which go into this superstructure are those of virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and love. If we add these things, we shall never fall. The gracious promise is "For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly *into the everlasting kingdom* **of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 1:11).**

The kingdom of the Messiah, the Christocracy, exists as an interim of conquest and subjugation. It is to be succeeded by the everlasting theocracy. As the Father gave the rule to the Son in order to accomplish his divine purpose in "a plan for the ages," the Son will deliver up "the kingdom of God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power" (1 Cor. 15:24). The Christocracy was made necessary by revolt in heaven and rebellion on earth. When the revolt is overthrown and the rebellion overcome, the rule of the Messiah will end. "And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. 15:28).

That God may be all in all! **This is the goal of the Reign of heaven. This is the theme of angels and archangels. This is the message of apostles and prophets. Is it also your aim in life, the purpose of your existence? "Thou shall have no other gods before me." This was the cornerstone of the constitution given to the trembling seed of Abraham at the foot of quaking Sinai? It should be the touchstone of your being! "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that you look for such things, be diligent that you may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless."**

SIMPLE TRUSTING FAITH

by W. Carl Ketcherside

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SIMPLE TRUSTING FAITH

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Preface

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This book was not written to create an argumentative situation with those who are gracious enough to read it. It is not a lawyer's brief to be presented formally to a jury of peers, but a sharing with others of the simple faith which is the hope of one man's life.

The author knew what it meant as a boy to pad barefooted along country lanes shaded by trees which created cool tunnels with their interlacing branches above. And in such an environment he came also to walk by faith in a God who was in heaven, and yet not remote from the earth which He had made. Now, in the asphalt jungles created by that state which is called growing civilization, there has arisen the need for examining again the grounds of such belief to determine if they are adequate to a mature person in a more sophisticated age.

Not only will you read the author's conclusion but you will also be treated to the reasoning by which he arrived at it. That rationalization may not always appear logical to you, and the conclusion may be divergent from your own, but the book is not intended to be a profound treatise. It represents the reflection of a plain man and makes no pretension of scholarship or erudition. It re-states the faith of a one-time country lad caught up as a man in the whirling vortex created by an urbanizing culture.

It is not the contention of the author that everything new is

bad, and everything old is good. Rather than either of these views, he holds that there are certain values which are unchanged and changeless, and that it is these which form the solid rock to be gripped by the anchor of hope. The boulders dislodged by doubt and rolled along the bed of the turbulent stream of modern thought may provide subjects for dialogue but not a foundation for a stable life.

If the reader is motivated to give earnest heed to the things which God has spoken and to examine his own life in the light of what has been revealed, the prime purpose of this little volume will have been achieved.

About the Title

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When I was a boy our family lived on a farm. We were only a quarter of a mile from the cultural center of the rural community which was represented by a frame schoolhouse and frame church building, both sitting on an acre of ground which had been conveyed by an early settler to be used for educational and religious purposes with a clause in the deed that if it ever ceased to be so used it would revert to the heirs and assigns of the donor. It was my good fortune to be selected as janitor for both buildings, a task for which I received six dollars per month from the schoolboard and two dollars per month from the church treasurer.

In memory I can still smell the sweeping compound which I sprinkled upon the pine floors to allay the dust, and I can still see the shed on the back of the lot with one side filled with corncobs to be used for kindling and the other side with coal to be used for fuel once the fires were started. We were a simple people of humble tastes and the facilities for teaching during the week and for corporate expression of praise on the Lord's Day were very limited. There was a general feeling that scholars should not be pampered and that "frills and fancy fixin's" were out of place in the worship of the lowly Nazarene.

The meetinghouse was a stern box-type structure without steeple, but with a belfry, because the bell had to be rung each first day of the week, even if all of the worshipers were already present. It acted as a signal that the service was ready to begin

and no one would have thought of commencing until the dangling rope had been pulled at least ten times. There was a concrete porch in front which served as a convenient place for the men to pause and discuss current weather and crop conditions. During the week it became an outdoor dining area for the schoolboys who could lay out upon it their sandwiches of cold biscuit and colder bacon while the boiled eggs rested on the lid of the sirup bucket which served as a lunch pail.

There were two entrances to the meetinghouse, one for women and girls, the other for men and boys. Little boys lived for the day when they could be free from the clutch of their mothers and could sit on "the men's side." The seats had been made by a neighborhood carpenter, cynically referred to as a "wood butcher." Those who sat in them for long came to realize how pitifully meager must have been his knowledge of human anatomy and posture. They also looked forward eagerly to the opportunity of standing for prayer. Several of the seats were shortened on each side of the stove which was a large one. When it was glowing red on a cold day it was noticeable that the one or two obdurate sinners in the community sat farthest from it since it gave obvious and forceful illustration of the fate awaiting them as described from the speaker's platform.

That platform was not large but it was covered with a piece of Axminster rug which had been donated by a family at the time of their removal from the community and who wanted to give the congregation something by which to remember them. The speaker's stand was painted a drab gray to match the seats. This was known as "lead color" and it was easiest mixed in that day before various hues and tints became popular.

The worshipers dressed for meeting in quite simple fashion. Each of the women had a "Sunday dress" of black which was also worn to funerals. The older ones wore a stiff bonnet made on the same lines as the limper ones worn while working in the garden on weekdays. The men wore a clean pair

of bib overalls with a colored hickory shirt. No one owned a white shirt, which was locally called a "biled shirt" because such an item required boiling in the huge iron wash kettle in order to remove the soiled appearance created by dust and perspiration. In any event a white shirt soon became yellowed after being subjected to the strong homemade lye soap which gave out a pungent odor even when the huge chunks were lying on the shelves in the smokehouse.

By modern standards the services would be sneered at because of their casual and informal nature. They always began with a song announced by the leader, with the congregation making up in volume and enthusiasm what they lacked in harmony and musical finesse. Several hymns were sung, followed by a scripture reading and prayer, after which the Bible study was led by one of the men, generally an elder, and then the Lord's Supper was observed. The entire congregation marched forward during the singing of a hymn and laid the contribution, a free-will offering, upon the table. Little children were permitted to go forward and put in a penny with the same concern that their parents put in their dimes and quarters. Occasionally someone who had been to the city to work returned and put in a five dollar bill. Such sums were thankfully received at the same time they aroused suspicion as to the giver's life while he was away from home.

Since I have grown I have traveled in many parts of the world and have spoken to thousands. I have visited famous cathedrals and have gazed at shrines regarded as sacred by various peoples. I have heard famous theologians and listened to renowned choirs. But I am not sure that I have found a way of spiritual life more satisfying than that I knew when I was a country lad. Then there was no discussion of the relative value of faith and works. It was taken for granted that the child of God would exhibit both. One did not share with a sick neighbor because it was his duty but because it was a part of his own life. "If one member suffered all of the members suffered with him."

Charity drives were not necessary because the persons whom you would solicit were already over where the emergency existed doing their best personally to help out.

There have been great revolutions and upheavals in thought and behavior patterns. The industrial and technological advances which have been made under the impetus of scientific research, the ushering in of the Space Age with its thrilling and challenging potentials— these have combined with other factors to change us from an agrarian society and a rural populace to an urban society. Life is no longer simple but complex. Existence is not a mere struggle for survival against the forces of nature in our affluent culture. And the result is seen in our contemporary worship habits.

Housing projects and subdivisions now cover the land which a few short years ago was the haunt of rabbits and quail. Conformity is the rule in everything but the religious structures in suburbia. In these the architects allow their inventiveness to run wild and some of the results are bizarre and strange. It is as if those who dwell in deadly sameness during the week must find respite in something different on the first day of the new week. Sermons are carefully prepared to really say nothing when it appears that something is being said. The audience no longer consists of participants but of spectators. Frequently they draw nigh to God with their lips and honor him with their mouths but their hearts are far from him.

There is a tendency under these circumstances to look with supercilious disdain upon the lives and habits of our parents and grandparents. We speak with condescension of their lack of formal education and of the meagerness of their thinking. We tend to pity them because they were unworldly and other-worldly. But there was a peace and serenity within them which has escaped us in these days. I cannot help but believe that it came because they lived very close to God. They came to Jesus as a personal friend and they never doubted that he knew and

understood both their joys and trials.

When I was casting about for a title which would define, as well as designate my purpose in this little volume I thought again about some of the "invitation songs" which were sung as the congregation implored their friends and neighbors who were unsaved to come to the cross of Christ. One of these songs lingers in my heart unto this day. It was entitled, "Will You Come?" The chorus is as follows:

O happy rest, sweet happy rest,

Jesus will give you rest;

O why won't you come in *simple trusting faith?*

Jesus will give you rest.

I have come to the conclusion that rest can only result from simple trusting faith. No other kind of faith can produce it. It is only when men repent and become as a little child that they can enter the kingdom. To those who could criticize this personal witness as being childish, I merely say that I prefer to think of it as child-like. As the apostle said, "We also believe and therefore speak."

God Is

Contents

"But without faith it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" **(Hebrews 11:6).**

The writer of the letter to the Hebrews devotes that section of his epistle which comprises chapter eleven to a roll-call of the faithful who lived in the ages preceding the advent of Jesus. Among these was Enoch, the father of Methuselah. Of him it is affirmed, "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death: and was not found because God translated him; for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God" (verse 6).

The original Greek term rendered by our English word "translate" simply means "to transport to another locality or place." During his lifetime Enoch pleased God to such an extent that God allowed him to escape the pangs of death. He was transported directly from this world to the next without experiencing the separation of the spirit from his body. And this was the result of his faith in God.

The example of Enoch provides an opportunity for the author to point out the impossibility of pleasing God without faith, and to show the minimum requirements of faith demanded of those who come to God. The entire context demonstrates that faith involves a firm trust or confidence in God, and this must begin with the acceptance of God's existence, that is, the fact of

his being. However, the faith that pleases God cannot stop with a mere intellectual assent to his existence. It must recognize the personal concern of God for those who are concerned with him and who demonstrate that concern by seeking after him.

In spite of the fact that rewarding faith must begin with an acknowledgment of the existence of God the sacred scriptures nowhere devote time or space to presenting direct proof of it. The Bible starts with the simple declaration, "In the beginning God," and speaks of him as a functioning being performing the majestic act of universal creation. We believe that the absence of such proof from the Bible is attributable to at least two factors.

1. *The nature of its content.* **The Bible purports to contain a divine message addressed to man in that form of communication best adapted to his understanding. To find much of it devoted to proving that the author really existed would be like receiving a letter from an earthly parent who spent half of his epistle in affirming his existence and identity. Such a course would create more doubt and suspicion than faith.**

It is obvious that the character of the author will be revealed in his writing. One who is human cannot write a divine narrative and one who is divine would avoid those pitfalls which would identify a narrative as human. If we have a document which attests that it is from a divine source, and if internal evidence indicates it could not have been produced by human power or ability, we must assume the prior existence of God as its author. This is exactly the basis upon which the Bible begins. It is the logical manner in which a revelation from God should begin.

2. *The nature of revelation***. Our word "revelation" is a translation of the Greek** *apokalupsis***. This word signifies to unveil, uncover, lay bare, or make naked. When that which has previously been hidden is uncovered it is said to be revealed. If it is tangible it is perceived by the senses, if it is intangible it is**

comprehended by the mental faculties. The thoughts and purposes of God are uncovered for us by the words of holy scripture. Thus these scriptures are a revelation of the mind of God.

Man is a rational being and God will not deal with him in such a manner as to offset, stifle or discourage his reasoning powers. To do so would be to treat him otherwise than as a man for it is his rationality which distinguishes him as a *human* being. For his own mental development and stability man must exercise the domain or faculty of reason. This requires taking cognizance of those things which can be perceived by the senses and properly analyzing them in their relationship to the rest of the universe.

Simple reasoning involves the combination of two known or accepted facts in such a manner as to arrive at a third or new fact, called a conclusion. This enables one to arrive at concepts of those things that are intangible, from observation of those that are tangible. The unseen can be concluded from the things that are seen. The revelation of God only uncovers for man what he cannot discover for himself.

Man can arrive at a satisfactory conclusion concerning the existence of God without access to direct verbal revelation. From personal experience as well as from the testimony of history man has been made aware that there are definite limitations upon his own power of creativity. There are bounds beyond which he cannot proceed either individually or collectively. Results achieved and established above and beyond these bounds are, therefore, attributable to super-human power. Now that which is superhuman we regard as divine. The word "divine" is the term we use which indicates that which belongs to, or proceeds from deity. By observation of the phenomena related to the created universe it will be seen that certain characteristics manifested are superhuman in nature and can belong only to a divine being. It is this fact to which Paul alludes in Romans 1:18-20.

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; because that which may be known of God is manifest in them: for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhood: so that they are without excuse.

It will be a worthwhile project to analyze this remarkable statement and determine what is implied in its content.

1. Heaven is interested in and concerned about the affairs of men on earth.

2. Man is a responsible being and accountable to a power outside of, and greater than himself.

3. God is not neutral as relates to the behavior of men but actually expresses his displeasure with their irreligious and unjust actions.

4. This characteristic of God may be ascertained by observation and study of his created universe.

5. Intangible and invisible things may be reasoned out clearly from things that are made.

6. Since men have access to source material from which they have opportunity to learn about the nature and attributes of God they are without excuse for ungodly conduct in the divine presence.

The wrath of God is the divine displeasure with or indignation against the behavior described. Such behavior is an offence against the majesty of God and destructive of the spiritual, moral and ethical ideas incumbent upon those who are his creatures. It is designed to convince those who deny the existence of God of his personal being. For rational beings to

engage in the kind of life here described indicates a doubt of the existence of God or of the divine nature which cannot tolerate that which is ungodly or unjust. If they cannot be convinced otherwise punishment must be meted out which will leave no question.

The word "ungodliness" is from a term which implies impiety, irreverence, or lack of respect for deity. Such an attitude may manifest itself in neglect of worship and homage as well as in overt acts and declarations. One need not blaspheme the name of God in order to be ungodly. To withhold from God the honor that is due him will place one in this class.

"Unrighteousness" relates to iniquity toward men. It means unfairness, inequity, or injustice. These two cover the whole scope of our responsibility. Jesus declared that the first and greatest commandment was to love God, and the second was to love one's fellowmen. He affirmed that all the law and the prophets were suspended from these and were thus dependent upon them. Just as love for God and man embraces all of God's commands, so ungodliness and injustice comprehend the full gamut of human wickedness.

The expression "hold the truth in unrighteousness" is misleading. To the extent men hold the truth they are righteous, and unrighteousness exists in proportion to their refusal to hold and be governed by the truth. The correct idea will be ascertained when it is remembered that the word translated "hold" had two meanings. It literally means to hold down and men hold things to maintain or keep them in possession, or to hinder or restrain them. This last is the clue to the meaning in this instance. The truth is held back or hindered by the impiety and injustice of men.

There is no excuse for conduct which deters or hinders the advancement and dissemination of truth. Those who are guilty of such behavior cannot plead ignorance of God. "That which

may be known of God is manifest to them." The apostle speaks primarily of those in the pagan world. The Jews had an advantage in the fact that the oracles of God were committed unto them (Romans 3:2). They were entrusted with the sacred writings. God revealed himself unto them through the word, but he manifested himself to all men through the world.

Not everything can be known concerning God. There are some things beyond the horizon of human perception. The apostle does not imply that those without a special revelation can know as much about God as those who have such revelation, but there are many things that can be known. The existence of God, the power of God, the nature of that power, the attributes of God, the divine wisdom and mercy and justice— all of these can be deduced from application of the rational powers to the created universe. What one can learn he is obligated to learn. The purpose of the apostle is to demonstrate that enough may be known concerning God as to leave men without an excuse for impiety and iniquity. It is not essential that one have a knowledge of the specific requirements of God in a verbal revelation in order to know the nature of God. All nature bears testimony to the divine existence.

It is asserted that "the invisible things of God from the creation are clearly seen." The "things" here mentioned are the traits or characteristics of God. No one can perceive God by the senses. The attributes of God are not discernible to the eye and cannot be discovered by physical sight. But the creative activity of God made available to man a great storehouse of investigative material. This can be seen. It is visible and as man reasons upon it the invisible factors in the character of God are made manifest. These are specified by Paul as eternal power and Godhood. They are uncreated but are understood by what was created; they are intangible but are understood by the tangible. One reasons from the known to the unknown; from the seen to the unseen. All acquisition of knowledge is conditioned upon proper usage of the knowledge already possessed. One must

have a foundation upon which to build.

In view of the fact that the invisible traits of God are understood by the things that are made, we need to determine the rational processes by which we arrive at justifiable conclusions concerning the nature of God. It must be noted that there are three different things involved: power, eternal existence and deity. All of these it is affirmed can be reasoned from the visible manifestations in creation.

1. Creation is obviously an effect and for every effect there must be a cause and this cause must be adequate to produce the effect.

2. The effect which we call creation is so intricate and complex and interdependent in its various relations as to preclude its having come into existence by a mere fortuitous concourse of atoms.

3. The only alternative is to conclude that the effect is the product of an intelligent designer who possessed the ability to conceive the universal plan and execute it, as well as maintain it. This involves both originating and perpetuating power.

4. While it is justifiable to speak of the "great first Cause" as a designation for an intelligent being, it is not justifiable to use the expression if it is implied that creation proceeded from, or is maintained by, a non-intellectual source, for such source is not adequate as a cause to produce the known effect.

5. Since matter does not, and cannot, possess intelligence, the cause which produced the universe must be personal and the power exerted in the creative process must be personal force or energy properly guided and directed to achieve the desired end.

To this rational process various objections are filed by those who will to believe that the universe of which they are a part is not a product of personal might or power intelligently

applied to achieve a previously designed purpose. We are obligated to notice some of these and to file a reply to them.

1. The objection is made that it is a purely arbitrary conclusion that the universe is an effect, and that if it were it cannot be proven with such certitude as to be made a basis for further rationalization.

This objection, if sustained, would render all human experience invalid as a criterion and make a mockery of all human rationalization. All of our actions in the present, our predictions as to the future, as well as our interpretations of the past, are predicated upon the basis of causation of which mankind universally has an intuition. Upon this basis men have sought to account for the universe in all ages and places. It has universally been regarded as an effect by philosophers and peasants, by savants and savages. The fact that some have regarded it as a supernatural production and others with a superstitious premonition only serves to accentuate our contention that all alike agree that it is an effect, and what they have tried to do is to isolate and understand the cause.

There are two groups of modern thinkers who are specifically concerned with denial of the postulate of an intelligent and personal prime cause— evolutionists and atheists. Yet the universe is here and they are a part of it. They must either ignore it or seek to explain it. Man cannot consistently ignore that of which he is a constituent part, and these groups are compelled to try and account for the present constitution of the universe. In doing so, both have been forced to join the mainstream of human thought and regard the universe in its current state as an effect, for evolution is simply the theory of a cause leading to the effect which we observe and experience. That which is universally admitted should not require proof seeing there is no one to whom it needs to be proven.

There devolves upon one who presents a chain of reasoning

from which he draws a conclusion, the obligation to substantiate and validate each link as he proceeds. For that reason one may justifiably take the time and make the effort required to establish that the universe is an effect. This may be done by application of the following truth.

Any result which is observable or acknowledged, and which was achieved by an obvious relation and connection between those forces or principles operating in such a manner as to bring into being the said result, implies cause and effect. The acknowledged result is proof of the power of such forces or principles to produce it.

Our entire universe has been demonstrated to be one great system of causes and effects. On this basis we make application of all the discoveries of science. Our welfare, happiness, and even our very existence are contingent upon our conclusion that like causes produce like results, when there is no interference of secondary causes. This one great system operates as a unit, so that the multiplicity of causes producing a multiplicity of effects, constitute, in the aggregate, one great effect, interrelated, co-ordinated and harmonious. We must conclude that, if the whole universe is a system of causes and effects, and if these, in combination, form the universe into one great effect, there must be a cause possessed of the potency to produce the universe, and this one cause is responsible for this one effect.

It seems that there are but two ways by which the force of this can be evaded. One might deny the whole concept of causation and attempt to throw out of the court of human opinion all reasoning conditioned upon it. But to do this would make all history invalid, render all scientific application impossible, and bring utter chaos to the whole realm of thought. Such irrationality need not be noted except to point out its ridiculous aspects.

The only other alternative would be to deny the unity of

the universe and to argue that the functions of the powers producing the effects are not harmonious and sustain no relationship to each other in such a manner as to make one great unified whole. To this we reply that the scientific approach is based upon the postulate that there is a regular and invariable connection between the forces and their results, and between all of the forces as a coordinated system and all of the results as a coordinated system. Each cause is related to every other cause and each result to every other result and all are related to the whole. The conclusion must be that all power has a common source, and this common source of power is adequate to produce the universe as a whole, and is the very basis for every secondary cause and result in the universe.

2. The objection is made that one cannot possibly deduce an intelligent cause from a study of natural creation. It is urged that research can only disclose a relation between physical causes and results, all directly related to and concerned with matter, its properties and characteristics, and there is no logical connection by which an intelligent Cause can be apprehended or predicated.

This objection might have some validity (although we question it) if everything of a material nature was isolated and separated from all else, but it breaks down when it is observed that there is a correlation of the forces of nature into a harmonious and functioning whole, and that such a systematic or methodical process is essential to the preservation of nature itself and without it nature in all of its forms would be extinguished and perish. Even the most ignorant observer of nature sees evidence of adjustment and adaptation which proceeds according to law and gives indication of having resulted from plan and forethought.

The eye would be useless without light and the highest function of light would be abrogated without the eye. The eye is adapted to light and light is adapted to the eye. It is quite

impossible for one to create the other. The eye could not make a single tallow candle yet it can penetrate what otherwise would be darkness and envision what otherwise would be hidden when a candle is lighted. It is evident that the light was made for the eye and the eye was made for the light, and the purpose of both must have been known before either came into existence.

The element in which an object, an organ, or an organism must exist and function must always be present before the organ or organism which depends upon it for being can exist. Thus the earth was made before plants, water was made before fish, and atmosphere before animals or man. So light also preceded the eye. And all of this indicates design— rational design.

The close inter-relationship between animal and plant life is so striking as to cause even the most skeptical to think in terms of design. In some instances the plant depends upon an insect for its continued existence through pollenization while the insect depends upon the plant for its food supply. In such cases the plant is peculiarly designed so that as the insect secures his nourishment he automatically becomes laden with pollen. Moreover, the plant is particularly adapted to a specific species and this species is so shaped as to fit the plant. The bumblebee has a hairy body which is so rounded that it fits the bell of the foxglove flower almost perfectly, and the honey can only be obtained by contact with the arched stamens and the style which are placed ideally to insure maximum coverage.

Some flowers have traps which automatically close when an insect is within. The struggle of the prisoner to escape causes him to become coated with the pollen before the gently relaxing petals open to allow him to escape. In other plants the insect upon entering must cross a barrier of sticky material which assures that he will secure a good share of the pollen. One type of orchid deposits its insect visitors in a bath of water so that as they crawl out the precious substance clings to them. In another flower there is a sensitive spot on the stamen. When the insect

touches it a spring release causes the stamen to react in such a manner as to release a shower of golden dust. I have long thought that anyone who considers the remarkable fig-wasp would be forced to acknowledge the presence of intelligence and design in creation.

In the mineral field science has broken down various compounds and identified more than a hundred elements. These combine in various proportions according to certain laws to produce various substances. In many instances one of the elements has a greater affinity for another than the one with which it combines, but a combination with the affinity partner would create a destructive substance. For example, let us consider water, a substance which is absolutely essential to plant and animal life. It is composed of two gases, hydrogen and oxygen, in mathematical proportion of two parts of the former to one part of the latter. Hydrogen manifests a greater affinity for chlorine than it does for oxygen, but the governing principle affecting the universe sublimates this and compounds it with oxygen.

If the balance were disturbed to the extent that a union was formed of two parts of hydrogen and two parts of oxygen the result would be hydrogen peroxide and life for all breathing creatures would cease. Nitrogen is a gas which constitutes almost four-fifths of the atmosphere by volume. Water and atmosphere come in contact with each other constantly, but if hydrogen, nitrogen and three parts of oxygen were to combine the resultant compound would be nitric acid and again all life would end on earth.

Yet, nitrogen in the form of protein, is important to the proper constituency of animal tissue. Accordingly, bacteria in the soil act upon it to convert nitrogen taken from the atmosphere into nitrate, which is a form adaptable to the need of plants and fitted for their absorption of it. Animals eat the plants and man eats both plants and animals, and thus obtains the

protein. Nitrogen is taken from the atmosphere and converted for use as plant food; man takes the plants and converts them to human diet, and thus the protein is derived. Such synchronization is not the result of mere chance nor can it be.

The postulate that there is an intelligent cause responsible for the universe is seen to be valid because it is not based upon mere matter, but upon the manipulation, arrangement and function of an intricate and inter-related system of physical entities. It would seem ridiculous to assume that such organization could result without an organizer. To believe such a thing would make one far more credulous than to acknowledge faith in an intelligent designer and creator. The universe is the result of a demonstration of personal power both in origin and maintenance.

ETERNAL POWER

It is affirmed by the apostle Paul that not only can we determine God's power from what has been made but also that his *eternal* power is manifested. There are two Greek words which are sometimes translated "eternal." One is *aionios*, the other *aidios*. The first applies specifically to duration undefined, the second to permanence and unchangeableness. It is the second of these which the apostle uses in Romans 1:20, with which we are now concerned. Whereas "power" accounts for the origin of the universe, the fact that it is everlasting accounts for the continuance or maintenance of that which has been created.

To one who accepts the universal concept of causation it will at once become apparent that the universe as a whole and as one unified system, must have resulted from one prime cause, and that this cause existed prior to all creation, and the power exerted in producing the universe was, therefore, an uncreated power. To that which is uncreated and which may exist apart from and independent of all secondary causes, we give the

designation "eternal." Upon this basis the ancients regarded God as "The Eternal."

The continuity and preservation of the created order requires a demonstration of the same power as was requisite for its origin. It is impossible to account for the uniform and constant operation of the material universe simply by reference to the laws of matter and motion. The primary cause must be something more than mechanical, otherwise we would have to conclude that an endless progression of motions has been communicated from matter to matter without any first mover. Our very reasoning about "laws of motion" must proceed upon the basis that matter is inert. There was a power outside of, and superior to all of the force manifested in the universe, which placed in motion the entire system. The fact that it has continued in constant operation is evidence that the same power sustains it.

Chance can no more govern the world than it could make the world, and to argue that the world was brought into existence by chance, that it is a mere fortuitous concourse of atoms, and that subsequently chance imposed laws upon nature by which it was forced to act with regularity and uniformity, is to argue that chance operated in such fashion as to put an end to chance. That which operates by law cannot operate by chance and while it might be argued by the unlearned that a single and detached law might be discovered or imposed by chance, it would be ridiculous indeed to suppose this with regard to an intricate system of laws requiring meticulous synchronization.

All human experience would lead us rather to conclude that, without an intelligent power to repair the decays of nature and restore it with frequency, chance would be much more likely to destroy the world than to create it. Any machine left to itself deteriorates and any system without intelligent direction tends to distortion and dissolution. If the majestic planetary system simply happened by chance and is maintained by the same chance which produced it, that chance has acted with certainty

and design. But that which so acts is not chance at all. If the solar system, by mere chance, were to be disturbed until the sun came but a few degrees nearer the earth all life on our planet would go up in a ball of flame, if it moved a few degrees father from the earth the result would be a shroud of ice many feet thick.

That which is indebted for its very existence to power is wholly dependent upon the power that made it. If it could not have existence originally without application of power, it cannot continue in existence without that power. If it be argued that originally it was conceived and created by power but that subsequently it is controlled by "laws of nature" this simply means that the power which made it now governs it by principles imposed. It matters not whether such laws were announced as specific precepts or whether they proceed from certain ingrained characteristics, their origin and result are the same. There can be no principle of self-subsistence in the world independent of its cause. The permanence of universal functions argues the perpetuity of divine power. The government of the world requires such wisdom and power as no other being besides its Maker could possibly possess. The world is either governed or it is not. If it is governed it must be governed by the Creator. The existence of the world is a testimony of *power*. Its continuation bears witness that this power is *eternal*.

To one who accepts the declarations made in the Bible as valid these things present no problem. The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews declares that the Son of God "upholds all things by the word of his power" (1:3). All things were made by the power of his word, all things are maintained by the word of his power. In Colossians 1:16, 17, it is said, "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist." The original word translated "consist" literally means "to stand

or hold together." Thus these remarkable verses affirm that the creation and preservation of the universe are invested in the same being. The one who brought all things together in creation holds all things together in perpetual recreation.

The ancient psalmist, recognizing that the forces of nature combine to prove the eternal power which brought them into existence, urges them thus, "Praise him, sun and moon: praise him all ye stars of light. Praise him all ye heavens, and ye waters that are above the heavens. Let them praise the name of the Lord; for he spoke the word and they were made; he commanded, and they were created. He hath made them fast for ever and ever; he hath given them a law which shall not be broken" (Psalm 148:3-6).

This one passage expresses the following concepts: (1) Creation was the act of God and was accomplished by the power inherent in the divine being; (2) The instrumentality of creation was the word of God; (3) The creative power is identical with the sustaining power; (4) The universe is maintained by law and the law of maintenance is also of divine origin.

GODHEAD

The apostle affirms that from nature, that is, the things that are made, one can come to know three traits or characteristics of God, as follows: (1) power; (2) undiminishing or permanent force or energy; (3) divinity. This last is expressed in his word "Godhead," which might better be rendered "Godhood," as embracing all that is generally attributed to divinity. However, without becoming too technical we need to be very careful that we understand exactly what can be learned about the nature of God from reasoning on the things created, and the limitations beyond which, nature cannot go as an instructor.

A good place to start is with the two uses of the word

"Godhead" in the scriptures. These occur in Romans 1:20 and Colossians 2:9. The careless student might conclude that they mean the same thing, while the indifferent student, upon ascertaining that they are derived from two divergent terms might argue that this made no difference.

The fact is that the word used in Romans 1:20 is *theiotes*, while that in Colossians 2:9 is *theotes*. Neither of these words is found at any other place in the sacred scriptures. Richard Chenevix Trench, Archbishop of Dublin, in his "Synonyms of the New Testament" asserts that these two do not have the same origin, and that, "there is a real distinction between them, and one which grounds itself on their different derivations."

Briefly, the distinction is as follows. In Romans 1:20 the apostle is speaking only of "that which may be known of God" by considering his creative work. Nature can reveal much to us about God and thus we can *know about* him. We can know enough about him that we are left without excuse. But we cannot *know* God in a personal sense except as he is revealed in the person of his Son. We can learn of the divinity of God, his majesty, glory and might, from a study of creation, but we cannot know him in the intimacy of personal relationship except through Jesus. Perhaps the distinction between "divinity" and "deity" may express the difference.

The "Godhead" which we can deduce from our observations of and rationalizations about the created universe is related to the majesty exhibited in creation. It is of this the psalmist exclaims in his familiar words, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world" (Psalm 119:1-4). There are some things in which this passage is very important to our study. An analysis of it will be quite revealing. While we cannot be

exhaustive in our treatment of the verses we would like to mention a few salient points.

(1) The planetary system is the result of God's creative power and is a source of glorification for him.

(2) The heavens convey knowledge and proclaim the wonders of God's power.

(3) The declaration is not made in articulate language and no sound is heard.

(4) The glorification of God is universal in scope as the planets can be observed throughout the whole earth.

This brings us to the point where we may summarize our conclusions about God and detail those things we can know by the application of our reasoning faculties to the created things around us.

1. God is the first cause of all things and thus is uncaused and uncreated. He is self-existent as a being and is an intelligent designer as recognized in the intricate synchronization of natural forms.

2. God is personal as evidenced in the creation of man. The capacity to know and to love can only logically be accounted for on the basis that man is a product of a creator who has the same ability. It is obvious that the creator must possess a personality far superior to ours, otherwise he could not commit to others what he does not himself have.

3. God is spiritual, and is unlimited and unconfined by time or space. He suffers no restrictions and is infinite or unlimited.

4. He is immutable. In view of the fact that God possesses all things good and is perfect, he cannot acquire a perfection nor

lose one. One who experiences perfection in the absolute can find nothing to adopt, else he would not be perfect, seeing that he lacks something. By the same token he cannot be divested of any attribute or quality that he possesses and remain perfect.

5. He is eternal as we have previously shown.

The minimum of faith essential to coming to God is a belief in his existence coupled with the conviction that he is interested and concerned with us as persons and that he manifests this concern by rewarding those who seek him diligently. "Faith is a firm confidence as to things hoped for, a firm conviction as to things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1).

My Personal Apology

Contents

Our word "apology" is an interesting one. It is not a translation but a transliteration of the Greek *apologia*. In our day it is frequently used to designate an expression of regret for some improper or injudicious remark or act. This was not its original sense at all. Instead, it referred to a statement, either oral or written, in justification or defense of one's conviction about a matter under challenge.

In its early days Christianity became the butt of attack by pagan philosophers and politicians who were masters of the art of ridicule. Many of these were brilliant men in positions of authority in heathen schools and governments. But there were also men of ability who wrote in behalf of the faith, and the second and third centuries of the Christian era produced some noble apologists. From their replies we can ascertain the charges made against the followers of Jesus, and can determine how these accusations were countered.

We shall introduce here only one of the apologists who is especially interesting because of the format of his presentation. Minucius Felix was originally a Roman orator and rhetorician. When he was converted to the Christian faith he directed all of his talents toward the defence of that which he once hated. His learned treatise was probably published about 210 A. D. Following the best style of that day it was in the form of a dialogue between Caecilius, a heathen, and Octavius, a Christian, with Minucius sitting as moderator between them.

Caecilius, during the course of his remarks, produces all of the current arguments in defence of polytheism, and makes all of the charges then in vogue against Christianity and the persons who had embraced it. In behalf of the various deities who were alleged to inhabit the summit of Olympus it was urged that history revealed that the gods had not only protected those who faithfully devoted themselves to their worship, but avenged them of their enemies who unjustly attacked them. It was argued that miracles had been wrought through their power and those who possessed a special dispensation to divine had foretold events which had subsequently come to pass. Caecilius also affirmed that a Supreme Deity had always been revered and worshiped in conjunction with many gods, and that there had ever been one who was regarded as the chief of the gods.

Against the Christians various charges were hurled. They were accused of having deified a publicly executed malefactor, the chief witness against whom were his own countrymen. It was urged that they demanded a blind faith as opposed to a rational system of philosophy; that they invited the illiterate, sinners and criminals into their society; whereas, only the instructed and pure of heart were initiated into the heathen mystery cults; and that the various Christian sects were intolerant toward each other, exhibiting animosity toward those who professed to be followers of the same God. Caecilius also pointed out the poverty and persecution which dogged the steps of the Christians and attributed this state to the weakness of the one whom they worshiped.

Caecilius further indicted the Christians as a desperate and unlawful faction composed of those who sought to import a religion from a provincial territory and impose it universally in ruthless disregard for the gods of other people. He declared that they heaped contempt upon all other deities than the one they worshiped, scoffed at their priests and derided their temples and sacred places.

Throughout the lengthy harangue, Octavius quietly listens without interrupting or heckling his accuser. At the close of the charges he speaks calmly to the chairman, Minucius, and informs him that he will endeavor by a clear statement of truth and fact, to exonerate Christianity from the foul aspersions cast upon it by Caecilius. He begins by admitting the truth of the charge that Christians held in contempt the gods of the heathen. He declares that such gods are but the creations of men and are helpless, and that all worship of them is vain. Here is part of his rejoinder.

> **The mice, the swallows, and the bats, gnaw, insult, and sit upon your gods; and unless you drive them away, they build their nests in their mouths; the spiders weave their webs over their faces. You first make them, then clean, wipe and protect them, that you may fear and worship them. Should we view all of your rites, there are many things which justly deserve to be laughed at— others that call for pity and compassion.**

After this introduction, Octavius proceeds to deal with the reasons for his faith in a logical and systematic fashion. In doing so he shows that the apologetic for one God was equal to the presentation of any of the philosophers in his day. Making his appeal to common observation and knowledge, he points out that man differs from the lower orders of animals, chiefly in this, that the beasts of the field are created prone to the earth, bent downward by nature, and contemplating always that only which will fill their bellies and satisfy physical needs. But man was created to be erect and upright, capable of looking abroad and of contemplating the heavens, possessed of rational powers, of conscience and a moral sense, all of which are calculated to lead him to knowledge of God, which, in turn, make him want to ascertain the will of God and please him. He proceeds to deny atheism as an absurdity, and postulates the need of a great first cause as dictated by the clearest light of reason and conscience. You will appreciate his approach in the following magnificent sentences.

When you lift up your eyes to heaven and survey the works of creation around you, what is so clear and undeniable, as that there is a God, supremely excellent in understanding, who inspires, moves, supports and governs all nature. Consider the vast expanse of heaven, and the rapidity of its motion, either when studded with stars by night, or enlightened with the sun by day; contemplate the almighty hand which poises them in their orbs, and balances them in their movement. Behold how the sun regulates the year by its annual circuit, and how the moon measures round a month by its increase, its decay, and its total disappearance. Why need I mention the constant vicissitudes of light and darkness, for the alternate reparation of rest and labour? Does not the standing variety of seasons, proceeding in goodly order, bear witness to its divine author? The spring with her flowers, the summer with her harvests, the ripening autumn with her grateful fruits, and the moist and unctuous winter, are all especially necessary. What an argument for providence is this, which interposes and moderates the extremes of winter and summer with the alloys of spring and autumn — thus enabling us to pass the year about with security and comfort, between the extremes of parching heat and of cold? Observe the sea and you will find it bounded with a shore, a law which it cannot transgress. Look into the vegetable world, and see how all of the trees draw their life from the bowels of the earth. View the ocean, in constant ebb and flow; and the fountains running in full veins; with the rivers perpetually gliding in their wonted channels. Why should I take time in showing how providentially this spot of earth is cantoned into hills, dales and plains? What need I speak of the various artillery for the defence of every animal— some armed with horns and hedged about with teeth or fortified with hoofs and claws, or speared with stings, while others are swift of foot or of wing? But, above all, the beautiful structure of man most plainly speaks of God. Man, of stature straight, and countenance erect, with eyes placed above like sentinels, watching over the other senses within the tower?

Having shared with you this much of the speech of Octavius in reply, I feel it would be unfair not to let you further read his answer to the charge that Christians were generally poor and despicable, and often persecuted and held in contempt by the more sophisticated members of society.

> **That the most of us are poor, is not to our dishonor but to our glory. The mind, as it is dissipated by luxury, so it is strengthened by frugality. But how can a man be poor, who wants nothing, who covets not what is another's, who is rich towards God? That man is rather poor, who, when he has much, desires more. No man can be so poor as when he was born. The birds live without any patrimony; the beasts find pasture every day, and we feed upon them. Indeed they are created for our use, which, while we do not covet, we enjoy. That man goes happier to heaven, who is not burdened with an unnecessary load of riches. Did we think estates to be useful to us, we would beg them of God, who, being Lord of all, would afford us what is necessary. But we chose rather to contemn riches than to possess them, preferring innocency and patience to them, and desiring rather to be good than prodigal. Our courage is increased by infirmities, and affliction is often the school of virtue.**

There are certain things which we may deduce from the foregoing and other Christian documents of the same era. Let us mention a few of them for your consideration.

1. The Christian concept has encountered opposition ever since its introduction into the world. Because of its conflict with "the wisdom of the age" it has been attacked repeatedly by the materialistic philosophers of every generation.

2. The early Christians did not flinch from their attackers but faced up courageously to the onslaught. They welcomed every examination of the basis for belief and heeded the admonition to be ready always to give an answer to those who queried them about a reason for their hope.

3. They were prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice for conviction, holding a firm trust that they might accomplish in death what they could not in life. It was this which prompted Tertullian (about 200 A. D.) to close his apology which was addressed to the emperor and his counsellors, in the following words:

> **But do your worst, and rack your inventions for tortures for Christians. 'Tis all to no purpose; you do but attract the notice of the world, and make it fall the more in love with our religion. The more you mow us down the thicker we spring up— the Christian blood is the seed you sow; it springs from the earth again and fructifies the more. That which you reproach in us as stubbornness, has been the most instructive mistress in proselyting the world — for who has not been struck with the sight of what you call stubbornness, and from thence prompted to look into the reality and grounds of it; and who ever looked well into our religion that did not embrace it? and whoever embraces it (on proper grounds) that was not ready to die for it? For this reason it is that we thank you for condemning us, because there is such a happy variance and disagreement between the divine and human judgment, that when you condemn us upon earth, God absolves us in heaven.**

4. It will be noted that the charges directed against Christianity in our twentieth century are not new, but are simply those of the second century introduced in a different garb. A careful analysis will show that not one novelty has been urged by modernistic skeptics. It would appear that neo-paganism has simply borrowed a leaf from the book of more ancient philosophy and revised and amended its content to meet the more refined age in which we live.

5. The weaknesses and frailties of the Christians are still urged as objections to their profession. The spirit of antagonism evidenced in sectarianism and factionalism is still a hindrance to the cause of Christ in our day. It would appear that the heathen

in all ages expect more fruit from the Christian tree than do its branches. But sad as the derelictions of Christians may be, it remains that these are not the result of following Christ, but of refusing to do so. And the condemnation of the hypocrisy of his professed followers is an indirect testimony to the purity of Jesus.

Perhaps I should apologize for offering my own apologetic. It is that of a plain man and not of a philosopher. There will be nothing profound about it and it will undoubtedly be rejected by many because it will be presented in the common language in which a simple believer must communicate his thoughts. There will be nothing new or startling about it and it will serve only to recall that which has often formed the foundation for the meditation of most of us in our quiet hours.

I believe in God. There are reasons why I believe. I have pondered them over and over. These reasons appear to me to have validity for my own life and thought. I offer them for consideration because I have personally considered them and they have relevance in the formation of my approach to life. I shall mention five different items. Four of these will be positive; the fifth will be negative. The last will be devoted to a discussion of the inadequacy of an alternative to faith.

THE UNIVERSALITY OF THE IDEA OF GOD

The idea of a supreme being has been a vital factor in the thought of every nation in the world. As far back as the history of mankind reaches into the remotest annals of time, this has been the case. And the idea of God has not been a fleeting thought or a wandering vagary in a few more enlightened minds. It has been the dominant factor in the formation of the varied cultures. It has been the thing to which men gave their allegiance when all else failed, the one belief which could not be banished permanently from the human heart. Religion has been the

regnant principle which moulded the laws, shaped the lives and conditioned the attitudes of every race, tribe and tongue.

Whether a people were considered primitive or advanced in civilizing influences, they had in common a belief in deity, and this promoted religion which, in turn, prompted action and conduct compatible with it. The American Indians who roamed the vast plains or lived among the forest trees, believed in a Great Spirit and contemplated a happy hunting ground where hunger and hardship would come no more. The Aztecs of Mexico, and their Toltec predecessors, sought to propitiate their gods with human sacrificial victims. Barbarous as this appears to us in a more enlightened age, it betokens the fact that deity was regarded as deserving the best that man could offer, and thus shows a strange paradoxical regard for human life even by those who so often sacrificed it.

Long before the Romans pushed their way northward into Europe the savage tribes which inhabited the area worshiped gods and poured out libations unto them. They glorified and deified their heroes who were credited with real and mythical exploits. Regarding immortality as being the reward for valor alone, they considered that the bodies of the brave after being purified by fire would again be invested with their spirits and conducted into the great banquet-hall of the gods for an eternity of feasting and rejoicing.

The Romans borrowed many of their own deities from the Greeks, so that the gods of the Greeks have exact counterparts in the Roman pantheon. The fertile imagination of the Greeks peopled the universe with so many gods that the poet Hesiod said there were actually thirty thousand of them. The Persians had their supreme being, Mithra, and under him the two inferiors, Oromasdes and Ariman, the gods of good and evil respectively. The Babylonians worshiped Bel and Nebo, and the Assyrians before them had their deities.

It is impossible for anyone to write the history of an ancient nation without devoting a great deal of space to religion. So interwoven is religion with the customs, laws, habits and events of every tongue and tribe that a recital of its events is actually a recounting of the impact of its religion upon the life of the people. Even the professed atheist who derides the idea of a supreme being, and who denounces religion as an opiate of the people, must admit that the idea of God is as universal as mankind.

When such a skeptic writes a letter, if he puts down the name of the week day or the month, he often is forced to use the name of a heathen deity; when he puts down the year he pays tribute to the entrance of Jesus into the world. The poetry he reads is replete with allusions to the gods of the ancients or to the words of the sacred scripture. If you were suddenly to remove every reference to religion or every quotation related to it, the literature of the world would become threadbare. The masterpieces of writing and speech would disappear.

If the idea of God had occurred only among barbarians and savages, one might conclude that it was a superstitious notion conjured up by the rude and uncultured. Or, if the idea was found only among the more enlightened he might reason that it was an outgrowth of the intellectual faculties, an invention to meet the need for explanation of certain intangibles. If the idea were limited to a certain clime in a certain age it could be argued that certain factors of environment, created by time and place, necessitated the concept, and it was devised because of this. Admittedly, no such reasoning could be justified but it might be more easily indulged.

But the truth is that all people, tribes and tongues, have believed in a supreme being. This has been as much a part of their existence as the eating of food or propagating the species. And it would seem to be instinctive as the satisfaction of hunger or breeding to produce offspring. Just as you could not find a

race of people who did not eat to sustain life so you could not find a race that did not believe in a deity. Can it be possible that this one deep longing and hunger for companionship with a supreme being, felt by all men everywhere, is the only passion without provision, the one desert of disillusionment without a single oasis? Would man create a desire to cruelly torment himself and perpetuate a myth with which to tantalize his own person? And if one man would do so, would all men do it? Would they do so simultaneously in a universe where many of them had no communication with any of the others?

It may be argued that many of the aboriginal nations were superstitious in matters of religion, and this is true. But it cannot be argued that they were not sincere. In their ignorance the *object* of their faith was misdirected, but the *effect* was not. Their conduct was consistent with what they did believe and they were held in check by what they held in awe. Their government, their customs, their cultures, were an outgrowth of their religion. How may we account for a universal belief in God if there was no God of the universe in whom to believe?

THE ANTIQUITY OF THE IDEA OF GOD

It is an interesting fact that when one goes back as far as historical research permits he finds that every nation had its traditions concerning creation, the primeval state of man, the origin of sin, the deluge and kindred matters. Concerning the origin of the existing natural order there is a remarkable agreement among the ancient Babylonians, Egyptians, Phoenicians, Assyrians and Greeks. All of the traditional views begin with a chaotic condition, all hold that light was created first after the chaos, all agree that with the coming of light, orderly development followed, all concur in the placing of the sun, moon and stars as regulatory bodies in the heavens.

We are limited in our examination of the veracity of a

people to the evidence at hand. For this reason we cannot go beyond the bounds of recorded history. But the earliest such records show that all the nations already held traditions which they believed and accepted as coming down to them from the very beginning. In fact, the recording of these traditions lest they become lost or forgotten actually gave rise in some instances to the inception of permanent records among them. We may express doubt as to the accuracy of the traditions but we cannot deny the existence of them. Since they did exist and were regarded as traditions and since they are beyond the pale of possibility for accurate evaluation, it would seem the role of wisdom on our part not to be arbitrary in our pronouncements. How do we know that they did not possess adequate and credible evidence to support them in a belief so universal?

Of course it is generally urged that, in spite of the agreements we have mentioned, there were also divergencies as to detail and various disagreements in the traditions. This is correct but instead of it disproving the traditions or weakening the fabric of agreement woven from them, it does the opposite. A tradition is "a handing over or a handing down." It refers to that which is handed down from one person to another, or from one generation to another. It is recognized that in all transmission of thought from one generation to another discrepancies arise. Men are not accurate either in speaking or hearing, and these inaccuracies are thus perpetuated. Where there is deliberate collusion and individuals conspire to make their stories conform this does not occur in written records.

Of one thing we can be sure, that the stories credited to ancestral origin are traditional and genuinely so. This does not prove the basis of the tradition to be factual but it does demonstrate that succeeding generations deemed it of sufficient value to pass on to their posterity. Having determined that accounts are genuine traditions, our task is to ascertain the element, or elements, basic to all of them, and we will then know the core of the original, free from the later modifications and

amendments created by passing time.

Traditions must have a beginning and that beginning must either be in fact or in supposition. In the case of the traditions to which we allude it can be said that those who received them believed implicitly that they accounted for the origin of the earth and of mankind. This indicates that those who conveyed them also accepted them and transmitted them as factual. It would appear that the antiquity of the traditions would be strong evidence for the existence of God and the creation of the material universe.

NATURE AND GOD

For a great many centuries men have pointed to nature as demonstrating the existence of God. In our previous chapter we cited the statement to this effect as made by the apostle Paul to the Romans. Other writers of the scriptures, both old covenant and new, have made the same appeal. In addition to these, great thinkers through the centuries have regarded the natural realm as an effect which demanded a supernatural and intelligent personality as essential to its origin.

Any attempt to explain the universe by eliminating God does not solve the problems or answer the questions. It increases both. It is as if an inventor created an intricate lock mechanism for a huge safe containing untold wealth, and provided the proper combination for access, only to have those in charge of the safe throw the combination away to experiment blindly with millions of possibilities in an attempt to gain entrance to the treasure. It is useless for those who reject God from their thinking to argue that their intellectual integrity is at stake for one must be much more credulous to accept their substitute theories than to believe in God.

Some men are so foolish as to think that God can be discounted and they themselves be considered as honest

doubters. This is not the case at all for the mind cannot continue as a vacuum. Man is so constructed as to require faith. All business and economic progress is based upon this principle, and in transacting our daily affairs we actually and practically "walk by faith and not by sight." The same thing is true in our attitude toward the world and ourselves. In the final analysis the choice is not between faith on one hand and doubt upon the other, but between rival systems of faith. It is not a question of whether we shall believe or not believe, but simply one of what (or whom) we shall believe.

Since the question is one of divergent forms of faith, it is obvious that the same criteria must be applied to the form of faith which denies God as to that which accepts Him. It is here that the "unbelieving believer" fails to measure up. He is like a merchant who has two sets of scales; one to use in purchasing, the other in selling. Or, like a man with two "yardsticks" of different lengths. When the same rigid tests are applied to the alternatives offered for God in creation, as are applied to the concept of God, it will be found that what is called honest doubt is not honest at all.

Men talk about having an open mind and infer that such a mind is one which settles on nothing. But there are absolute truths and upon these the mind is designed to close and retain them as foundational or axiomatic to the rational processes. On the farm where we lived we had a gate which insisted on swinging shut while we were trying to drive through to the field, so we propped it open with a chunk of wood. At the end of the season when we tried to close it we could not do so because the hinges had rusted and no longer allowed the gate to function. An open mind is not always a flexible one especially when it is kept open by an arbitrary prop. Some minds stay open because they cannot be closed and everything goes through while nothing worthwhile is retained.

It has long been a feeling of ours that the majority of those

who live closest to nature have an abiding trust in God. There are exceptions, of course, but generally speaking, men who wrest a personal living from the soil feel a sense of nearness unto God. This may prove little, or nothing, about the subject at hand, but the humility which comes from a recognition of one's inadequacy to make anything grow, coupled with the thrill of creativity as a partner of unseen forces, produces a feeling of relation to and reliance upon the Creator of the universe. Who should have a firmer trust in God than one who works directly with the elements He has made and the forces He has set in motion.

There was a time when mention of this fact was countered with the reminder that those who worked the soil were less educated and unsophisticated. That day is past and modern skeptics can no longer make it appear that "the greater the ignorance, the greater the faith." The argument was not even valid in the days of restricted educational facilities in rural areas, for there have always been men like Sir Isaac Newton, to affirm, "The whole diversity of created things could have its origin only in the ideas and the will of a necessarily Existing Being."

We rejoice at the new discoveries in the physical realm. It would seem obvious that, if God exists and created all things, the deeper we penetrate into a study of the result, the more we will come to appreciate the cause behind it. The true believer welcomes all objective research and thrills at every scientific breakthrough. A few years ago we were limited to a study of the atoms in the world, now we can study a world of power in each atom. There is no danger of displacing God by learning more about Him and how He works. The God of the ages will command the Space Age, as he did the Stone Age, the Iron Age, the Machine Age, and even the Dark Ages.

If it was essential to postulate God in order to explain the presence of universal power, how much more essential is it to

rest upon God as the explanation of atomic energy. It is hardly conceivable that the power which exists in the atom was self-generative, and to argue that such could happen would involve interminable guesswork as to what "triggered" it originally. The power to pull the trigger must reside in someone or something before it is applied to the trigger and this destroys the very idea of self-generation by conditioning it upon application of existing force. Since it is the nature of energy unconfined to expend itself, and since the power brought to bear in order to confine it must be greater than the energy, how can we account for energy being confined to the atom?

It is our own conviction that the natural realm argues the existence of God on the basis of two things: what has happened and what has not happened. The universe is here. We are a part of it and so conditioned that we can hardly continue in it without seeking to account for it. We must seek an explanation for what we see and experience. But our investigation has led us to discover potent chemical forces which would destroy the universe itself except that they are kept in intricate balance. To us, the most satisfying explanation is that of a personal and intelligent being "one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all and in you all."

In our previous chapter we spoke of design in nature and reasoned that this presupposed a designer who was intelligent. The highest expression of mind and the greatest demonstration of mental ability, is to take a number of unrelated physical things which are unconscious, and set them in such relationship with each other as to make them function in unison and serve the purpose of conscious design. Being wholly unconscious of relationship, function, design or purpose, such unity in consistent function can only result from an intelligent consciousness acting purposefully upon such things.

This can be demonstrated by such simple objects as the alphabet blocks with which little children amuse themselves. The

blocks are simply material composed of wood or plastic and are wholly unconscious of any relationship to each other. The letters of the alphabet imprinted upon them are visible symbols which have come to be accepted as representative of certain speech sounds. If we enter a room and find the blocks arranged in such a fashion as to spell out a simple sentence such as, "See the cat and dog," we immediately arrive at the conclusion that someone possessed of mental power has consciously arranged them thus. We know that neither the letters nor the blocks have power to arrange themselves so as to convey thought and we also recognize that the law of probabilities precludes the possibilities necessary for the blocks to fall into line and into the required sequence when casually tossed into the air. We have no hesitancy in concluding that personal conscious power was brought to bear upon them and arranged them to conform to design.

But such an illustration is far too simple to even approximate the complex relationships in the physical realm. Let us suppose that we go by a printing shop and see the fonts of type with thousands of upper and lower case letters. The next day we pass that way again and find the letters now composing a masterpiece of literature. Will we not know that an intelligent power has created the masterpiece? Could there have been "A Tale of Two Cities" without the mental direction of Charles Dickens, or a "Pilgrim's Progress" without the conscious effort of John Bunyan? Could "The Gettysburg Address" have formed itself without the mental genius of Abraham Lincoln?

Think of the seven notes in music. Each of these is a symbol for a tone which is merely a vibration in the air. The note, the tone and the air are all unconscious. But the marvelous genius of Bach or Beethoven could arrange the tones in such a manner as to create music to thrill the hearts of men and women in all generations. The mind of Handel is indelibly stamped upon the Hallelujah Chorus. In the same fashion the mind of God is imprinted upon the universe and "the singing of the spheres" is a composition of supernatural genius intelligently directed. The

world of nature is the result of personal creativity as certainly as was Longfellow's "Psalm of Life" or Whittier's "Snowbound."

HUMAN NATURE AND GOD

Physically, man is an animal. His body is composed of bones, muscles, sinews, tissues, veins and blood, as are the bodies of other animals. But if there is a difference between man and the other animals we need to know what it is. The fact that others are called "lower animals" indicates that man is higher and more majestic. What is the difference? Sometimes man is called "a thinking animal." Sometimes he is called "a religious animal." This implies that other animals are not rational, that is, they are not capable of reasoning, so they are not capable of worshiping or reverencing a higher being.

There is some quality in man which makes it impossible for him to be satisfied with material things. A hog can fill his stomach and lie down without a care. But man can dwell in a state of luxury and still be restless. His stomach may be full but his heart and life may be empty. There is a yearning deeply imbedded in the human personality which no earthly companionship can ever fully satisfy. The spirit of man reaches out for the source of all life. Not long ago we took some flowers in for the winter and placed them in the basement not too far from a small window. It was not long until every plant was bending toward the sunlight which filtered through the glass. In the same fashion the soul reaches out its invisible tendrils toward the Sun of righteousness.

The ancient psalmist said, "My heart pants for God as the hart pants for the water brook." The picture we conjure up is that of a deer relentlessly pursued by dogs or wolves. The frightened creature runs with tongue hanging out and body dehydrating because of perspiration, while the throat becomes dry and constricted due to the rigors of the chase. But finally

respite comes at sight of a brook of clear, cool water which serves to revive the flagging energy. The animal is so constructed as to require water to survive and water is to be found in every part of the earth. The longing finds an answer and the need is met.

It would be incongruous indeed if provision was made for every need of man except the highest and noblest. The testimony of millions will show that there is no void or vacuum at the summit of human desire and longing. They have not reached out into emptiness but have found a response to their cries. The hungering soul is fed. The thirsty heart is refreshed. The lonely are comforted with the thought of companionship which is real, though unseen.

Inherent in mankind is a sense of justice which demands that wrongs be righted, that inequalities be adjusted, and that ruthless oppression be punished. This has driven men to defy tyrants at the cost of life, to plead for recognition of human rights and to establish courts of equity. Still there is a constant sense of futility in the attempt to secure absolute justice in this life. Man has an ideal which he has not been able to reach. He is cognizant that there are shortcomings in any system which he creates.

There are no judges able to read the hearts of men or to determine actual motivations. Any attempt to set up a scale of responsibility ends in failure. The judges that are appointed sometimes fall victim to their own cupidity and are not free from taking bribes to thwart the demands of justice.

Is the principle upon which man proceeds— that every crime deserves punishment— a valid one? If it is not, then a criminal is as guiltless as a just person, and in the final analysis there is no such thing as crime. Against this form of theorizing the whole experience of the human race cries out and every law lifts up its voice in protest.

If the principle is valid, who will bring justice to attainment? Who will deliver to the dock the greedy and rapacious who have trampled roughshod upon the poor and helpless and exploited them in their insane attempts to command power and wealth and bask in luxury? Who will avenge the millions of widows and starving orphans who have been bereft of their husbands and fathers by warmongers who have literally waded through the warm blood of those innocent ones whom they have slaughtered?

Who will repay the callous-hearted who have herded men into gas chambers by the millions and have snuffed out human lives as carelessly as they would extinguish the flame of candles on a birthday cake? Who will exact retribution for the blood of martyrs burned at the stake, or flayed into ribbons of bleeding flesh at the gibbet, or reduced to insensibility on the rack?

Will there be no final vindication of the life of idealism or the cause of righteousness? Will the future be simply an increasing and eternal struggle to determine the validity of the two opposing concepts that might makes right or that right makes might?

Is there no umpire in the struggle of life, no ultimate referee? Will there be no final whistle blown to announce the end of the conflict? The very history of mankind cries out for a decision which will be universally pronounced upon what the poet calls "man's inhumanity to man" which he says, "makes countless thousands mourn."

Shall those who have fattened themselves upon their fellows and wallowed in the pens of their own swinish greed have no day of slaughter? Will the books never be closed and no trial balance ever taken? Surely there must be a Judge and a judgment day, else life itself is meaningless, useless and purposeless.

There is another aspect of human existence which we must not overlook. The deep longing to live forever argues that the grave cannot be the end of human destiny. In a hundred subtle ways the concept of the better life beyond intrudes itself into our thinking. It is the source of the purest hope which sustains man in a world which is often filled with problems which defy solution. All of us have had the experience of working late to meet an examination or to complete a project, only to have the solution escape us. We have comforted ourselves with the thought that after a night of sleep we may arise to a new day when the answer may become plain.

We struggle throughout life's day for the real meaning of existence. When we have some of the data of experience collected until we can begin to understand the purpose of life, we find ourselves powerless to hold our eyes open and we drift off into the dreamless slumber called death. Is there to be no awakening to a fairer day when faith can be realized in sight?

Those whose bodies are wracked with pain through a great part of their earthly sojourn, or whose limbs are crippled and distorted so as to defy normal use, sigh for a world where pain is banished and "the crooked will be made straight." Fathers and mothers who see the lives of their children warped by sin and who behold the tragic fruits of excess and immorality pray for a world where sin cannot enter and all that defiles will be debarred. Those who follow the caravans which wend their way to the silent cities of the dead, whose frames shake with sobs and whose cheeks glisten with tears, longingly look for a day when all tears will be wiped away and there will be no more sorrow, separation or death.

There is in most of us a rebellion against the philosophy that the intellect which can probe the secrets of space, discover the power of the atom, and direct the channels of electronic skills, can be rudely extinguished forever by a drunken and irresponsible driver, or by a crazed dope addict with an

assassin's blade. Even those who ridicule the thought of a life beyond, find themselves, when really confronted with the death of a loved one, in an inner turmoil which cannot resolve itself by the forced thought of utter oblivion.

A classic example of this fact is found in the case of Robert G. Ingersoll. After years of lecturing against Christianity for a fee, and of scoffing at the Bible and the church, the renowned orator found himself called upon to speak at the funeral of his brother. As he gazed upon the casketed form of one whom he described as "a brave and tender man," his eyes filled with tears he could not hide and finally he bowed his head upon the coffin in uncontrollable grief. It was only after a great struggle for composure that he read the funeral oration which contained the following memorable words:

> **Life is a narrow vale between the cold and barren peaks of two eternities. We strive in vain to look beyond the heights. We cry aloud, and the only answer is the echo of our wailing cry. From the voiceless lips of the unreplying dead there comes no word; but in the night of death hope sees a star and listening love can hear the rustle of a wing.**

The star of which the noted infidel spoke is the glimmering light of eternity inherent in the human personality from the beginning; the rustling wing is that of the celestial messenger of hope come to conduct the faithful to a better clime. Victor Hugo said, "The thirst for the infinite proves infinity."

THE FUTILITY OF REASON WITHOUT GOD

There is either a God or there is not. Every nation in history has paid tribute to a belief in deity. This belief has been so predominant as to affect the laws, customs and cultures of the nations. It is a universal belief and it is also one which is as old as the written records of these nations. The earliest of those

records affirm that they are but written accounts of tradition alleged to have originated in the beginning.

Such traditions either have a basis of fact or they do not. Man either derived the idea of God from tradition from the beginning, based upon fact; or from the external testimony of nature; or the internal and inherent principles which are a part of the human personality and being— or the idea is the product of his own reasoning.

It is this last upon which the atheist depends for an answer. But if this be true it is evident, according to its advocates, that man's reason has worked a universal deception and cannot be trusted at all. Would one place any confidence in an international counterfeiter who had palmed off his nefarious and worthless creations upon the most learned of all nations?

The idea of God exists. It is as old as mankind. If that idea is purely the result of reason and reason is so deceptive how can the atheist know that he has not been deceived, and that his reasoning has not led him into a blind alley?

We have no intention to derogate reason or its powers, but reason is the means by which we test and measure theories to determine whether they are true and factual. It is admitted by all that human reason is imperfect because no one has all of the data at his command. Is there no perfect Mind in the universe by which reason must be measured?

The Bureau of Standards in our national capitol maintains the perfect ounce as the basis of weights and the perfect inch as the basis of length. There is an observatory which constantly corrects time to offset deviation in official clocks. If one did not know what constituted a straight line he could not identify or designate another as crooked.

We believe that the very nature of reason demands that there be a Mind that is perfect and that where there is science

there must somewhere be omniscience as the final arbiter. Jean de La Bruyere said, "The very impossibility in which I find myself to prove that God is not, discloses to me His existence."

God Has Spoken

Contents

We have long been aware that when one accepts the truth that *God is*, and thus concedes that there is One who *is God*, he will be led to expect that such a Being will reveal his thoughts and ideals to the rational beings whom he has created. Indeed, one might well believe that a non-communicative God would not be God at all. There are certain aspects of life which rational beings long to know and which could only be ascertained by revelation from an omniscient being. To withhold such information when it could be given would be cruel, and since God could provide the information and it is his nature to be good, it is not presumptuous to expect him to do so.

Laying aside, for the moment, the claim of the sacred scriptures to contain a revelation from God, let us turn to the scientific method of arriving at a knowledge of a fact or truth. This requires that we move from the realm of what could be to the realm of what is or has been. The three steps are those of possibility, probability and certainty. If a thing is deemed impossible because of the nature of the subject this will at once eliminate the other two steps from consideration. This is not the case with probability which is a relative term. The degree of probability will be increased or diminished by certain factors which are so generally recognized that they are actually designated "laws of probability."

To demonstrate that a thing is possible does not argue that it is probable; to prove it is probable does not argue for its

certainty. To establish possibility removes it from the realm of the "cannot be" to that of "could be;" to establish probability advances it one more step to "might be." It is still another important step to the domain of "is." Those who begin with the admission of the existence of a personal God will have no difficulty with the question of possibility for it would appear to be a necessary corollary that "with God all things are possible." However, we shall assign the reasons for our personal conviction that it is possible for God to communicate the divine thoughts and will.

All reasoning for the acquisition of knowledge must proceed from the known to the unknown. Whether in mathematics or philosophy we must begin with the recognized factors. Man, as a creation of God has a mind with which to think and the ability to convey his thoughts. It is unthinkable that, in his creation of man with such ability, God exhausted his power. To argue thus would be to contend that God created himself out of existence, and in the process made man a God. He who possesses the whole power of God is God, and if man exhausted the power of the Creator and appropriated it to himself, this would be in contravention of reason which affirms that the creator must be superior to the created and exist before it.

Since God could not bestow a power that he did not have, and since such power could not be exhausted in the process, the fact that man is possessed of the organs and faculties of communication, demonstrates that it is possible for God to convey thought and to communicate his will to other intelligent beings. Although our immediate appeal is not the scriptures, it is not inappropriate just here to point out that they do not oppose the scientific method, but rather endorse it. Thus we have the ancient prophet asking, "He who planted the ear, does he not hear? He who formed the eye, does he not see?" (Psalm 94:9). It may be just as appropriately asked, "He that made the tongue, does he not speak?"

The nature of God and the needs of mankind constitute an argument in favor of the probability of God having spoken to the human family. God has exhibited himself as being kind, benevolent and loving. He is eminently good and has shown this by blessings bestowed upon the human family. He is called God which is but a form of the word "good." He is the Good One. It is a remarkable feature that mankind in primitive simplicity so referred to and described the Creator, and the Creator acknowledged the designation. The earth owes its existence to goodness. In spite of the wisdom and sagacity, the power and might, exhibited in the creation of the material universe, the Creator was not described by a word or words that indicate these. Although possessed of both omnipotence and omniscience, it is said, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." This world was a product of goodness in a pure and untinctured state.

We have previously affirmed that God has provided those things essential to the existence and happiness of man. He created an environment which forms a natural habitat for mankind. He has supplied the means for satisfaction of every urgent desire. Man is capable of curiosity out of which research and investigation grows, and yet he is limited in what he can ascertain through his own powers of study. The primary intellectual urge is to know of his origin and destiny. He cannot go back beyond the first man, he cannot pierce the veil of the future beyond his own death. It is evident that he must receive any information as to these two matters from the Eternal One.

Nothing else challenges man in his thought processes to the extent that his origin and destiny do. One of the first questions of importance asked by the child is, Where did I come from?" Equally important is the query as to where we go when we die. The child is an incipient philosopher for these questions are at the basis of all philosophy. It is not probable that one who was good would withhold from man the information so necessary for well-being and freedom from anxiety, and we must conclude that

a benevolent God would without doubt reveal the truth about these things.

The highest form of communication between rational beings is speech. Having suggested that the nature of God and man constitutes an argument in favor of God's having spoken, we now urge that the nature of speech is another such argument. Man is able to speak. He can employ the organs of speech in such a fashion as to convey his thoughts. The act of speaking is a responsive and repetitive process. No man speaks who has not been first spoken to. If one were born under such circumstances as to be immediately secluded from human society he would not be able to speak.

Children speak the language of the family into which they are born. This is so obvious that no one questions that a child born into a family where German is spoken will speak the German language, while one born into a home where French is spoken will speak that language. Since man speaks, it is highly probable that he does so because he was first spoken to. Since the Creator preceded the creation the first man could have heard only his voice.

In conformity with this, Moses records the fact of God speaking before anything is spoken by man, and when man does speak it is in response to God. Every period of creation is introduced with the expression, "And God said," but it is only when we get to Genesis 1:28, when human beings have been created, that we have the expression, "And God said *to them*." The rest of the creation was governed by instinct, but man as a rational being must be governed by instruction.

The difference between rational and non-rational creation is another basis for contending for the probability that God has spoken. Of all created beings man is most helpless at his entrance into the world. At birth he has no knowledge of life and no power to use any instinct available unto him. He cannot

defend himself nor hide from his enemies. He has no protective coloration conformable to his surroundings to conceal him from those who would destroy him. He cannot forage for his own food nor secure his own drink. He possesses no power of locomotion. He cannot discern color. He is born without a thought or a habit. He is dependent for survival upon the interest of other rational beings.

What is true of a human infant in one place is also true of human infants universally. We know it is true of those of three or four generations previous to our own and have no reason to doubt that it has always been true. In view of the need of the human being for the instruction of another interested and rational being in order to survive, it would seem that the first man in the infancy of the race, received such communication as was essential to his well-being from the Creator.

Further, it would appear that a communication given by God to man would be preserved insofar as it was of interest to the whole race. A number of factors may be urged for such a conclusion. We cite but a few of them.

1. Reverence for deity would prompt those to whom God spoke to hold as sacred any word received from him. Certainly if it is the tendency of men to treasure the words of great leaders and enshrine them in permanent memorials they would be even more concerned in guarding the word of God.

2. The generation receiving the communication would manifest every concern for transmitting it to succeeding generations as proof of the existence of God and his direct concern for their fathers. No one to whom God has actually spoken would fail to convey the message to his heirs.

3. The need for guidance from on high would not be limited to one generation and the same consideration which provoked the message originally would continue to demand its

repetition. Since God does not do for man what he can do for himself, or what another man may do for him, the communication once given would be continued by men.

4. Divine providence would operate to preserve the oracles of God, for the same power which gave the message originally could act to maintain it, and would do so because of the same need which prompted it in the beginning.

This being true, we should be able to locate a communication purporting to be from God, and bearing such marks as would validate its claims. Is there such material known to us? Every reader will immediately think of the Bible in this connection. Here is a collection of writings designated as "holy scriptures" and demanding the attention of mankind by its claim to be of divine origin. Is the Bible the kind of Book one would expect from God? If we draw up a compilation of requirements which must be met by any volume claiming to originate with Deity, will the Bible meet the criterion thus established?

1. A CENTRAL THEME

It will be agreed by all who believe in the existence of God, that if he intended to personally interrupt the onward flow of human history by a divine breakthrough in which the happiness and well-being of the human race was involved, he would point forward to it prior to its advent, and backward to it after its occurrence. That is, he would prepare mankind in advance for such an event, and ever after relate men to it. The nature of the revelation would be affected by whether it occurred before or after such divine visitation.

This is precisely the design of the Bible. It affirms that in Jesus of Nazareth dwelt all the fulness of Godhood bodily (Colossians 2:9). We use the word "Godhood" in place of "Godhead" as in the King James Version, for the simple reason that the term signifies all that is involved in Deity. Just as

"priesthood" encompasses all that is related to the functioning of priests, and "manhood" embraces all that is related to the state or character of being a man, so "Godhood" includes the state or character of being God. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself."

The self-revelation of God would obviously be the median line in history for all revelation from God. The Bible is eminently faithful to this requirement. "God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son" (Hebrews 1:1, 2). God hath spoken! This is the most important statement ever made. It assumes the existence of God and affirms the communication of his will to men.

Revelation, as to time, is divided into two eras— time past, and these last days. As to agency, it involved the prophets then, and the Son now. As to nature, it was originally in many parts at various times, now it is complete.

The prophets laid the groundwork for the prime event in history. They informed the world in advance of where, when and how the divine-human encounter on a personal level would take place. The first national prophet of the Israelites was Samuel, which accounts for the statement of one of the eyewitnesses of Jesus that, "All the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days" (Acts 3:24). The same witness said upon another occasion, "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts 10:43).

The apostles universally pointed men back to the cross as the hope of salvation. "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:2). "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness, but unto them

which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (1 Corinthians 1:23, 24). In the matter of design the Bible is manifestly the kind of volume which God would produce.

2. ADAPTED TO NEEDS

Again, it would appear obvious that any revelation from God must be adapted to the need of mankind at the time and in the place when given. The nature of the revelation at any given period would thus be defined and affected by the condition of those to whom it was vouchsafed. The world of mankind is composed of individuals and it passes through the same stages as do the individuals. The world has its infancy, childhood, adolescence and maturity. One does not communicate with mature men as he does with children.

The Bible is faithful in this respect. It actually presents the relationship of God to mankind in four dispensations— a patriarchal, a legalistic, a preparatory, and a mature state. In each age the revelation is given just as would be expected under the circumstances then prevailing. Each era becomes a foundation for the one succeeding it. The fact that God has so ordered his revelation has become the occasion for criticism from careless and casual thinkers. These have frequently objected to some things in the old covenant scriptures as childish and puerile, and unworthy of God. But the very word "childish" contains a clue to the reason for these things.

If a grown man stoops down to talk upon a level with his little son, and uses object lessons which appear to be trivial to mature observers, we regard this condescension upon the part of the father as an act of understanding love. If a parent insisted upon trying to teach a two year old child from a textbook on trigonometry and calculus instead of with building blocks we would conclude that such a parent was mentally unbalanced. On

the same basis we must not expect God's revelation in the childhood age of the world to be upon the same level as that in these last days.

All learning is done upon an ascending scale, using the knowledge previously gained as a stepping-stone for acquisition of additional information. Consequently all systems of instruction must recognize the need for conveying facts in conformity with this natural law, beginning with the elemental features and progressing to the more complex. As the creator of rational beings, God understands the heart and mind of man and adapts his communication to their nature. The ancients declared, "O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways" (Psalm 139:1-3).

That God has proceeded according to the universal law of instruction is evident in one passage which censures those who did not progress in knowledge as they should have done. "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat" (Hebrews 5:12). The original word for "first principles" literally referred to the letters of the alphabet and can be translated as the A, B, C's. In this place it refers to the old covenant scriptures as constituting the elemental revelation from God.

3. UNIFORMITY OF WITNESS

If there are two systems of revelation adapted to the needs of mankind in succeeding ages, both professing to be of divine origin, the latter must consistently recognize and respect the former and defend its authority for the age to which it was given. Any attempt to reflect upon the origin and validity of the

previous revelation would result in one of three conclusions: the first was not of divine origin, or, the second was not of divine origin, or neither of the two was of divine origin. God would not undermine his own authority and no revelation given by him would do so.

In this respect the Bible passes the test required of a compilation purporting to come from the same divine author. The system of religion and the scriptures regarded as sacred among the Jews, are both represented as being divine in the new covenant scriptures. Jesus attests to the divine origin of the Jewish system, and every writer in the new covenant scriptures who has occasion to mention the preceding dispensation recognizes the hand of God at work.

In the matter of primacy, Abraham was recognized as the father of the race, and Moses as the lawgiver. In John 8:52-59 is recorded a clever attempt of scribes and lawyers to trick Jesus into a conflict with what was known about Abraham but he resolved the controversy by saying, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad." The implication was quite plain that if Abraham was glad about the coming of Jesus on the basis of the meager testimony available unto him, those who professed to be his children should have been overjoyed when the Lord came.

In Acts 3:12-26, Peter made a speech to a multitude which assembled after a lame beggar, who was a public character, had been made to walk. The speech resulted in the arrest of Peter and John and their incarceration in the common jail. During his remarks the apostle affirmed of his hearers, "Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed."

In Galatians 3, the apostle Paul actually hinged his masterful argument on justification through faith, upon the

authenticity of the old covenant scriptures. "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed" (verse 8). The same thing is true in Romans 4:3, "For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. There can be no question of the attitude of the new covenant writers toward the origin of the promises unto Abraham.

What was true of the father of the patriarchs was equally true of the man who stood at the threshold of the legalistic age. Jesus said, "And as touching the dead that they rise: have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?" (Mark 12:26).

Nothing is clearer than the consistency with which the writers of the new covenant scriptures assign the old covenant scriptures to the power and the implementation of the Holy Spirit. Those scriptures were divided into the law, the psalms, and the prophets, and all of these are ascribed to the instrumentality of the Spirit.

Peter affirms that no prophecy of the old covenant scriptures was the result of mere human interpretation of events or trends. The message did not originate with the messenger. "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of men; but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21). In harmony with this he asserts that it was the Spirit of Christ in the prophets which "testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow" (1 Peter 1:11).

In Acts 1:16 Peter affirms that a certain scripture had to be fulfilled, having been given by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of David. He then declares, "It is written in the book of Psalms" (verse 20). This is important to notice. It gives the

divine agent of revelation— the Holy Spirit; the human agent for transmission— David; the method of revelation— oral speech; the means of preservation— writing. In a few words purely incidental to a narrative we have provided for us the whole scheme of revelation. The fact that it is incidental, and thus undesigned, makes it all the more valuable.

It is hardly necessary to multiply the examples from the new covenant scriptures in which the validity of the old covenant scriptures is asserted and upheld. The reader can seek these out for himself. However, we would like to mention a point of interest which, although it approaches the matter from the negative aspect, is very significant. Critics of the Bible have meticulously investigated every word of both the old and new covenant scriptures. Many of these critics have been prejudiced against the Bible. They have approached their research with pre-conceived notions adverse to the authorship and authority of the Book.

These men have listed any minute discrepancy in testimony, and mistakenly branded it as contradictory. We can be certain that if they could have located one place where they could turn the scriptures against each other it would have been grist for their mill and they would have kept it grinding incessantly. But the old covenant scriptures purport to be a message from God pointing forward to the coming of a new covenant, and the new covenant scriptures purport to be the fulfillment of the old, and affirm over and over again the divinity behind them. The critics are thus forced to use their inventive ability and imaginative quality to make any case at all which will appeal to the credulous reader.

4. WORTHY MOTIVATION

If it is concluded that God created man as a rational being, and that the purpose in doing so was to provide for mutual

delight in each other of the creator and the created, it would appear reasonable that any communication directed toward the latter must proceed from a motivation worthy of the creator. Any selfish and unworthy motivation exhibited would lay the communication open to serious question as to its origin. If, upon examination of the scriptures called "sacred" there should appear a trivial and insignificant reason for the message contained in them, our intellects would rebel against acceptance of the information as coming from God. A divine communication should manifest the following characteristics:

1. It must uphold the majesty of the infinite and the splendor of one who is the object of all glory, honor and praise.

2. It must exhibit that grace which is an expression of God's goodness and which enables him to bestow benefits upon those who are undeserving and unworthy. Since we can plead no merit of our own, a communication from God must proceed from that attribute which imputes merit, else the communication would either be impossible or worthless.

3. It must, as we have previously suggested, take into account the nature of man, including his circumstances, needs and ability, and be couched in such language as to convey divine thought in terms that are understandable and comprehensible.

4. It must proceed from such motivation as transcends all other purposes, means and causes, and which is of such nature that all abuse of it by unworthy men can never permanently damage or finally destroy its value. The motivation must be as eternal as God himself.

The highest motive from which intelligent beings may act is love, and the Bible constantly holds out to us that it was this which prompted God's action in behalf of sinful and undeserving mankind. Since the word means so many things and covers so many categories in our day it is well to mention that

the love (Greek *agape*) which motivated God was not mere sentiment or affection. Although no one can define this love, or confine it to mere terms, a working description of it may be, "That active and beneficent good will which stops at nothing to achieve the good of the beloved object."

This love is never passive, and once appropriated by a rational being, creates a responsiveness which manifests itself through that person. It thus becomes a dynamic which can truly save the world. John declares that "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son" (John 3:16), and again, "By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (1 John 3:16).

Paul declares that it is the one absolute without which nothing else is valid, and while faith, hope and love are abiding principles, the greatest is love. It is twice affirmed by John that "God is love." Any elaboration upon this matter would be simply repetition of that which the earnest student may read for himself in the scriptures, and is not necessary here.

We accept the scriptures as being a revelation from God. They meet the criteria for such a revelation and bear a stamp of their origin in the form of internal evidence upon themselves. It is our conviction that God has spoken to man, revealing or uncovering for man what he could not discover for himself. We regard the Bible as containing that revelation and it is authoritative, not because of its beautiful literary composition, but because it is the word of God.

The Word Made Flesh

Contents

Man is so constituted that he learns best by demonstration. Since God formed him thus it is but natural that he would accommodate his revelation to this trait. We should not be surprised that, in addition to what we may learn of God through creation and verbal revelation, we have His Son sent down to share our lot and allow us to experience a personal relationship with the Father. Jesus said, "And he who sees me sees him who sent me" (John 12:45). Again, he informed the disciples, "If you had known me, you would have known my Father also, henceforth you know him and have seen him" (John 14:7).

One of the most challenging statements ever written was penned by John in these words, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father" (1:14). "The Word became flesh." Who was that word? How did he become flesh? In what sense was he full of grace and truth? To answer these questions is to probe the very secret of eternal life. Let us look at the context of the statement.

"In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." The translators have capitalized the term "Word" indicating that it should be considered as a proper noun. This is not the designation of a mere thing but the name of a personal being. John actually wrote in Greek and he uses the term "Logos." This has been translated by "Word" in our English vernacular. Who was the Logos? That he was with

the Father from the beginning and that this extended beyond creation and preceded it is evident. "By him all things were made and without him was not anything made that was made." This certainly implies that the Logos was uncreated and was the agent of all creation.

Among the Greeks the word "logos" did double duty. It was the term for both "reason" and "word." There is a danger that we may, because of our modern connotation of the term, regard reason as a mere process by which we take cognizance of the world about us, and inductively or deductively reach certain conclusions by which we regulate our lives and conduct. There is nothing wrong about this, but it may betray us into placing limitations upon the term which are unjustifiable and which may operate in such fashion as to obscure a greater and more precious perspective. Reason can never be divorced from personality in a conscious being. If it be true that "as a man thinketh in his heart so is he," reason makes the person what he is. It is creative!

Thus, it is more nearly correct to say that reason is power rather than a process. The latter is simply a demonstration of that power in one aspect, the formulation of concepts from perception and observation. We must distinguish between power and its manifestation. Just as each man is what he is because of reason, so God is what He is because of the divine mind. Man is limited by time and space, but God is not. The attempt of modern science to conquer both is really an attempt to become like God. Although many researchists who seek to extend life and penetrate space, deny the existence of Deity, their very efforts are unrecognized attempts to attain the divine.

Those who are in the flesh and are by nature subject to spatial and temporal restraints hardly conceive of the manifestation of personality except by the presence of the body. But this may confuse the person and the form which is simply an adaptation given because of the environment in which the

person dwells. And there is ever the tendency to think of God as a man and to restrict Godhood by the chains which bind manhood. Sober thought will convince us of the folly of such rationalization and will free us to recognize that the divine Reason (Logos) may be manifested in two persons, or expressed aspects of Godhood, at the same "time." Deity is not subject to the restraint of time.

It is impossible for man to express his ideas without words. It is even impossible to think without words. The term "embodied" is very appropriate since words are the bodies of which ideas are the soul or spirit. As the body without the spirit is dead so a word devoid of an idea is also dead and powerless. The expression of the divine mind must also be in the word—The Word. But the very being of God is invested in such expression and thus The Word is not merely a vehicle of divine thought but the personification of divine being. The Greek "Logos" is admirably qualified because of its historic and philosophic emphasis to express the message of the Spirit with reference to the Son of God. Time and space, the two forces against which we always struggle, will not permit us here to detail that emphasis. We must trust our readers to accept the wisdom of the spirit in this choice and proceed from there.

"In the beginning was the Word." John is not saying that the Word began with the beginning of the world. Instead he is affirming that when the world began the Word was already present. The Word preceded the creation, thus was uncreated or self-existent. The Word is not a consequence, but a Cause; not a result, but The Source; not a production, but The Author.

"And the Word was with God." This indicates association and intimacy. It reveals a relationship which portrays sharing elevated to its highest degree, sanctified by divine nature. So close was the relationship it was as if God communed with His own mind. Thus we gather that the Word was with God in purpose and intent, in plan and perfection of plan.

"And the Word was God." Students in depth have found this a perplexing statement and many have stumbled over it. Some cultists with special theological axes to grind have taken advantage of a peculiarity in the Greek to warp the passage so as to lend some credence to their own mistaken views. A part of the difficulty lies in the difference between the way Greeks used a noun in a sentence and in the way we use such a special form in modern English. Generally when a Greek employed a noun he preceded it with a definite article. We would expect to find *ho theos* **used here, as** *theos* **was the word for God, and** *ho* **was the definite article.**

But the article was not used in this case. When the article is not employed the noun becomes primarily descriptive. It is apparently the intent of the Spirit to convey the idea that the Word is not identical with God. There is a distinction as to person as shown by the clause immediately preceding, but the Word possesses the same nature, character or essence as God. Whatever was required to constitute Deity was to be found in the Word. The attributes of Godhood were attributable to the Word.

"All things were made by him." To this is added "And without him was nothing made that was made." The universe owes its existence to the Word. He is the divine creative power or energy personified. If it be true that all things, without exception, were brought into being by his agency, it is easily seen that his pre-existence must be admitted, and he is in the realm of the uncreated. This must be accepted by faith. "Through faith we understand that the world was framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which do appear."

"In him was life and the life was the light of men." The Logos was living. But there is more to it than that. Life is being but it is more than mere being. It is existence but it is more than mere existence. It is more than extension of existence or

duration. Eternal life is the life of the Eternal One, and this life was in the logos and it was the light of men. It revealed that which previously was shrouded in mystery. The minds of men were thus free to penetrate the truth of ages because the true light, the real light, had come at last. And the darkness in the universe could not extinguish that light.

Now we come to verse 14. "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father." The Logos became flesh. The creative Word who brought all things into being as the very pronouncement of God, the controlling Reason who regulated the universe as the very Mind or Spirit of God, now breaks through the flesh curtain which had separated pure Spirit from the material and thrusts himself into the historic continuity of human existence. This was a concept undreamed of by all of the heathen poets and philosophers.

The word "flesh" cannot be explained away on some higher or more elevated plane than we usually think of it. It is a translation of *sarx*, the word for our human nature, frail, subject to temptation and desire, "He emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in the likeness of men" (Phil. 2:7, 8). This is almost too staggering for us to grasp or accept when we contemplate its full implication. God was unwilling to dwell aloof or in isolated splendor away from man. The Creator subjected himself to the state of the created. He involved himself directly in our predicament. God stooped down to minister and to save, and by this one act of intervention forever glorified such bending down for such a mission.

This is the basis of the Christian concept. It is not a philosophy, a ritual, a code of laws or a religion. It is a fact, a historical fact. Something happened toward which all of the past had pointed and toward which all of the present still points. The broken threads of human existence were gathered up in a moment, the hopes and ideals of the world were brought into

focus. The problems of the ages were summed up and the total was found to be the correct answer.

The Word became flesh and the seed of the woman was born who was to tread upon the head of the serpent and deprive him of his power over those who were all of their lifetime subject to bondage through fear of death.

The seed of Abraham arrived through whom all the families of the earth would receive a blessing. "Now the promises were made to Abraham and his seed. It does not say, 'And to seeds,' as if there were many, but rather 'And to your seed,' which is Christ" (Galatians 3:16).

The Shiloh, the great Peacemaker, predicted by the aged Jacob as he prepared to die, entered the world and the gathering of the people unto him began as he had said.

The branch of Judah came forth as a root out of dry ground and the Lion of the tribe of Judah was introduced to the world.

Bethlehem of Ephratah, small and inconsequential, now became a place which the world would never forget.

The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, once an area viewed with contempt, now were made ready to see a great light where once the people dwelt in darkness (Isaiah 9:1, 2).

It was as if all the rivulets running down the side of the mountain of prophecy now converged into one, and became a mighty flowing tide carrying everything before it.

"The Word was made flesh . . . and we beheld his glory." This places the personal advent of the Word in the flesh where all historical events belong which are to be accepted as fact by succeeding generations, the realm of testimony. Testimony must be furnished by witnesses, and witnesses must present that of

which they have direct knowledge through experience. Those of us who live now do not *know* that Jesus lived upon the earth, but we *believe* that he did. That belief is based upon testimony.

There are certain criteria which witnesses must meet, and certain rules for admissible evidence, and when the witnesses and the evidence fulfill these requirements, honest men must accept the testimony as factual. To do otherwise would be to reject the only basis upon which we can accept any event as having happened before our day.

We have the testimony of certain persons that Jesus lived on the earth and that he presented to them convincing proof that he was the Son of God. There are enough witnesses to establish the truth related to the fact, for "In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established." A fact is a fact whether there are witnesses or not, but belief in that fact requires witnesses. Though a plurality of witnesses is all that is sufficient to establish a case, the more witnesses there are the stronger the faith may become in the fact.

The witnesses for Christ were qualified for their special task. They were humble tradesmen or simple working men who had no theological philosophy to promote. They were singularly free from all preoccupation with ideas and systems which would require defence, and were capable of receiving the impress of facts. They were alert, observant and quick to respond. They did not speak the language of the schools but they could tell a plain tale of what they saw in language which was forceful by its very simplicity. They were willing to live in, and if necessary, to die for it as proof of that belief.

Moreover, they were trained as witnesses. They were chosen, called and qualified as witnesses. Their task was not to develop or define a systematic theology, but simply to tell of their relationship to a person, and they were constantly with him for well over three years. When one of their number defected and

committed suicide they enunciated the qualifications for his successor in these words, "So one of the men who have companied with us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us— one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection" (Acts 1:21, 22).

In Luke 24:48 Jesus told them that they were witnesses of the things which had happened; in Acts 18 he declared, "You shall be my witnesses in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth." In Acts 2:32, they said, "This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses," and they repeated it in Acts 3:15. In Acts 10:40 one of them testified that God raised Jesus "on the third day and made him manifest, not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead."

When an event becomes a matter of testimony one who was not present cannot logically deny the event. In order to do that he would have had to be present and examine the alleged event at the time. After that his only recourse is to deny the testimony. But one cannot do this arbitrarily unless he admits to being deeply prejudiced and inconsistent. He must examine the testimony and reach an unbiased opinion or belief based upon it.

With reference to Jesus it is admitted that there are those who testified to having been with him both before and after his resurrection from the dead. There is a sufficient number of such witnesses to satisfy any impartial court of law. To deny the fact of Jesus one has only three alternatives, but none of these can eliminate an examination of the testimony. He may present proof to show that the character of the witnesses is such as to render their testimony worthless; or he may show that the witnesses were not sufficiently acquainted with the fact to which testimony is given; or he may show that the testimony of the witnesses is contradictory and thus self-invalidating.

1. *The character of the witnesses*. **As stated before, the chosen witnesses were humble and rugged men. They were not taken from the extremely poor nor selected from the rabble. They were engaged in their several occupations and supporting themselves when they were called.**

They were accustomed to observe the flow of events around them and were articulate enough to describe what they saw. They were not prejudiced in favor of the resurrection of Jesus but were hard to convince. When they were first apprised of the fact they did not believe it. When Jesus appeared among them "they were startled and frightened and supposed they saw a spirit" (Luke 24:36). It was necessary for him to talk with them and calm them with the words, "See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me, and see; for a spirit has not flesh and bones as you see that I have" (Luke 24:39). In spite of this they still disbelieved and Jesus had to take food and eat it before them.

One of those who was not present at first would not accept the word of the others. He made a positive declaration that he would not accept the fact of the resurrection unless he had personal proof of it. This was no indication of doubting and he has often been maligned as "doubting Thomas." He simply demanded evidence and in such fashion as to remove all question. When confronted by Jesus and invited to thrust his finger into the nail prints in his hands, and his hand into the spear wound in his side he was convinced immediately of the identity of Jesus and of the fact of his resurrection.

Since the testimony of the witnesses is before us it is evident that it must be true or false. Either these things happened or they did not. If they did not happen it is quite obvious that those who said they did were either deceivers or deceived. It can be argued that they were not deceivers from the nature of the testimony.

The one thing a forger or deceiver dreads most is investigation and close scrutiny. For this reason he always writes in generalities and avoids minute details. The more he connects his account with particular persons and places, and with specific dates, times and events, the more liable is he to detection of the fraud which he seeks to perpetrate. This is especially true if his work is to be circulated during the lifetime of those mentioned and in the places to which he refers.

To be meticulous in such documentation would serve to provide the cross-examination with every conceivable advantage. If there were in existence those who opposed the purpose of the narrative all they would need to do to throw suspicion upon it would be to summon those to whom reference was made and prove by them that what was alleged did not transpire, or by showing grave discrepancy between the testimony and the facts of history and geography, to demonstrate that the witness was unfamiliar with time and place, and not to be trusted in other details.

So widely accepted is this that it is said, "Generality is the cloak of fiction." Accordingly, when a writer who purports to give a record of historical fact supplies many details related to time, place and person involved, it is an assumption that he is stating facts and has no fear of scrutiny or examination. This is especially true when it is known that the writing was in general circulation during the lifetime of those mentioned therein. Truth fears no investigation and can provide minute details without hesitancy.

This is the very method employed by the writers who have recorded the facts related to Jesus of Nazareth. Consider, for example, the scrupulous details provided with reference to the forerunner, John the Baptist. We are given the name of his father and mother, the priestly status and course of the former, his occupation at the time when he was given information about the forthcoming birth of his son, and even the spot where the

messenger stood while giving the information.

Even more impressive is the documentation relative to the time when John gave his announcement. We are told that it was in the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar, and are supplied the names of the governor of Judea, the tetrarchs of Galilee, Ituraea, and Abilene. For good measure we are also provided with the names of Annas and Caiaphas, who were said to be high priests. This last is most interesting, because at that time, according to history, the Jews recognized Annas as high priest, while the Romans with their occupational forces had deposed him for obduracy, and dealt with his son-in-law, Joseph Caiaphas, in his stead.

As another case in point, consider the account of the raising of Lazarus from the dead. Lazarus is identified by his relationship to two sisters, and one of these is further identified by a public act performed. The name of the village is given, its distance from Jerusalem, and also the name of one who volunteered to accompany Jesus on his mission. The time of death is given as is a description of the grave and the method of closing it. We are told that many Jews were present and told why they had come and what they said and did. In the actual coming forth of Lazarus his condition is described, and the need for those about to release him from his winding-sheet.

The narrative does not stop there. It continues by relating the effect upon the Jewish observers, some of whom believed while others hurried to report the happening to the Pharisees. We are even told that these summoned a meeting of the council, and one of the speakers is named and a record of what he said is preserved. The continuing interest of the Jews in Lazarus is mentioned and the fact that many came to Bethany out of curiosity to see Lazarus, so the chief priests plotted his death because "on account of him many of the Jews were going away believing on Jesus."

In view of the fact that this was written and circulated at the time when many of the people of Bethany, or their children, were still living, and many of the Jews survived, it is obvious that if there were any untruths the entire account would have been discounted and discredited long since. Apparently the writer was not in the least afraid of close study of what he wrote, even by the principals involved.

Another point worthy of consideration is the fact that the writers, even though aware that the nature of the material was startling and extraordinary, made no attempt to convince the readers of the truth of the statements. It is noticeable that when men anticipate doubt and questioning they seek to bolster their message with proof drawn from various sources. But those who wrote about Jesus did so on the basis that what they set down for perusal was generally known and their only purpose was to present a straightforward account so that the facts might be preserved.

Even in dealing with some of the greater miracles there is no effort to explain or account for what would seem inexplicable, no attempt to answer in advance the cavilling and ridicule of skeptics, or to anticipate objections. Indeed the apostolic testimony is as noteworthy for what it omits as for what it included and the restraining hand of the Spirit was as evident as the permissive power. We must not forget that "the fame of Jesus was spread abroad throughout all Syria. . . . And great crowds followed him from Galilee and the Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and from beyond Jordan" (Matthew 4:24, 25).

If the writers had been attempting a deception their approach would have been altogether different. They would have presented arguments calculated to reinforce and strengthen their narrative and to make the things they recorded appear plausible. The apostolic witnesses relate the most astounding events in matter-of-fact fashion, assuming they are

already generally known and need only to be casually mentioned in order to be called to mind.

We must remember that the enemies of Christ did not even attempt to impeach the character of the witnesses nor did they deny the facts to which they testified. It would seem incredible that twelve men would band together to perpetrate a hoax which would fool the most intelligent people of the earth for twenty long centuries, and yet never be discovered by those who lived at the same time as themselves. Even more astonishing is the fact that all of them were so convinced of the truthfulness of their message that they were willing to die rather than renounce it.

We are aware that such willingness does not establish the truth of a proposition but it does show that those who died for it believed it was true. If it is true that "seldom for a righteous man will one die," it is equally true that "seldom for a right principle will one die," and not at all for what he believes to be a palpable untruth. We do not believe that at this late date the character of the witnesses can be impugned and their testimony discredited upon the basis of their reputation.

2. *Acquaintance with the facts*. **If it can be shown that even though the witnesses were men of veracity, they had no adequate knowledge of that to which they testified this will at least cast doubt upon the validity of that to which testimony is given. A witness must be qualified as well as honest, conversant with the facts as well as upright in demeanor. With reference to the resurrection which established the claims of Jesus to be the Son of God, we have the obligation to enquire if the witnesses had sufficient access to Jesus as to enable them to know without question that he arose from the sepulcher.**

Let it be recalled that for one to be ordained as a witness of the resurrection he had to accompany the body of witnesses "all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he

was taken up from among us" (Acts 1:21, 22). Such a person would be so thoroughly acquainted with the person of Jesus that it would be highly unlikely that he would not recognize him, or that he would mistake another for him. He would be able, given proper exposure to his person, positively to identify him when he saw him. The point which immediately concerns us then is whether or not the witnesses were given ample opportunity to observe the one who claimed to have risen from the dead so as to make immediate identification possible.

This would involve the number of appearances before the witnesses, the time and nature of such appearances, and the opportunity provided for scrutiny and observation.

a. Jesus appeared to both men and women. If he had appeared only to the latter it would have been argued that they were emotionally upset by his death and victims of an overwrought imagination.

b. He appeared to individuals and to groups, the largest number being in excess of five hundred.

c. He appeared in a garden, in closed rooms, on the open road, at the seashore, and on a mountain.

d. He appeared at an early morning hour, during the day, as dusk was closing in, and at night.

e. He conversed directly with the witnesses and ate and drank with them.

f. He summoned them by name, identified himself and invited inspection.

g. He referred to his past associations and called attention to communications made prior to his death.

h. He ascended in their presence, and they were confronted

by celestial beings who called him by name and predicted his return at a date yet future.

i. He later appeared to Saul of Tarsus who was so convinced of his presence that his entire life was transformed.

Some of these witnessed his death, observed his burial, inspected the tomb after his resurrection and provided a description of what happened in his various appearances. There is no logical way to account for their testimony except upon the basis of fact unless one can prove collusion and deliberate hoax. Such proof will need to be conclusive and must be documented in order to offset what appears to be a straightforward account.

3. *The only other alternative is to show that the testimony is of such contradictory nature that the witnesses rebut each other and render what is said incredible*. **The written account of the witnesses has been available for nineteen centuries and has frequently been under intense attack, yet it has always survived. It must be remembered that, if a number of witnesses testify to a certain fact, the question to be ascertained by their testimony is whether or not they agree in establishing the truth of that fact. That they may arrive at their conclusion from different angles, or that one may add incidentals which another omits, or that the various points of proof do not appear in the same sequence or in chronological order is inconsequential in the final summarization and analysis.**

I have examined the testimony of the witnesses and I find no discrepancy which invalidates the conclusion that Jesus is the Christ. All agree that he lived, that he was crucified and that he was raised from the dead. The various accounts of such matters as the inscription on the cross have no bearing upon the fact that one was nailed to that cross, and that he was identified as Jesus of Nazareth. I find no trouble in believing that "the Word was made flesh" or of placing my hope in him. I believe that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah. I believe that he is the Son of God.

The Virgin Birth

Contents

In simple trusting faith I accept the accounts of the virgin birth of Jesus as factual. There is nothing within my rational constitution which recoils from the thought that he was begotten in Mary by the Holy Spirit and born of her body in so far as the flesh was concerned. I do not find myself inclined to speculate about how this could be or how it was accomplished, nor do I feel obligated to account for the means in order to accept it. When men talk about the impossibility of accepting this intellectually, they speak of a type of intellect which I do not possess.

I see no reason for training my feeble intellectual powers to be skeptical of everything they cannot immediately grasp or fully explain. Intellect need not be opposed to faith and it is dangerous to regard it as being so. On this basis some have even come to doubt their own existence or the reality of the world in which we are placed. My faith does not preclude my intellect in that area where it operates. It is a function of that intellect making possible its outreach into unexplored vistas, and even into regions which cannot be analyzed because of human limitations. I do not hamper or cripple my intellectual powers by proceeding upon the basis of faith. Instead, I enhance them.

It is argued that the virgin birth is contrary to our scientific findings and must be rejected either because it cannot be subjected to scientific criteria, or because it contradicts all that is known as a result of the application of such criteria.

Actually this is based upon a presupposition as I shall show in my next chapter, and I simply do not acknowledge the validity of that presupposition. To say that our advanced "scientific knowledge" will not allow us to accept a thing is to speak unscientifically. Science is knowledge. The word is from the Latin *scientia*, to know. As we employ it, the term denotes knowledge according to system, or knowledge properly classified.

Science embraces the branches of knowledge of which the subject is ultimate principles, or facts as explained by principles, or laws arranged in natural order. To talk of "scientific knowledge" is the equivalent of saying "knowledge knowledge." It is obvious that man has not exhausted the field of knowledge, or all experimentation would immediately cease. Therefore, there are areas to which knowledge does not extend. Anything within those areas, or in areas outside the realm of investigative procedures used by science, would be in the domain of imagination, speculation or faith. About such things science could only theorize.

The individual who accepts the idea of a divine being upon what appears to him to be valid evidence of the existence of such a being, and who further accepts the idea that this being has revealed his thoughts will act upon faith with regard to the matters covered in that revelation. Another who rejects either the idea of a divine Being, or a revelation, or both, will proceed upon the basis of speculation, theory or opinion in reference to such matters. This is not the same as saying that science is opposed to faith. The most that can be said is that the scientist, acting upon the basis of previously accumulated data, doubts the possibility of the virgin birth. This points up two important factors. One is the limitations of science which makes it impossible for science to dogmatically deny that which is accepted upon faith. The other is that those things which lie within the scope of the divine are not subject to the scientific experimental process. To argue against the *possibility* of the

virgin birth is to reduce it to the domain of the natural. If supernatural power operates in such a situation it is not impossible at all. To doubt the virgin birth is really to deny the possibility of supernatural power in the universe.

The birth of Jesus has always been a problem to those who view the universe from a purely natural standpoint. Certainly the one person who would be most concerned about the virgin birth would be the virgin selected to bear the child. The one who would be most skeptical would be the man to whom she was engaged. And in the individual encounter of the divine messenger with these two we find all of the questions, but we also find the answers!

The angel first sought to quiet the fears of Mary and then said, "You will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus." The natural question was, "How can this be, since I have no husband?" In her simplicity Mary was fully aware of the impossibility of pregnancy without impregnation. The answer of the angel was, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you." Then came these words, "For with God nothing is impossible."

This forever placed the matter in proper perspective. The question after centuries have gone by, is still, "How can this be?" Some have denied absolutely that it could be, some have tried by devious means to supply a man in order to make it rational. One of the most frequently quoted statements in our day is that of a theologian who writes, "The birth stories, are to be sure, most improbable . . . for this reason, the simplest thing to believe may be that Joseph was the natural father of Jesus." He concludes that if this is not the case, "Jesus must have been the child of a German soldier. After all the claim develops, such is the experience of many girls near military camps."

As to Joseph, the record is quite clear. We are told, "Now

the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit; and her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.'" Thus the two persons most vitally concerned in the event were satisfied with the divine explanation.

MYTHICAL ACCOUNTS

In recent times those who would deny the truth of the record of the virgin birth of Jesus, have sought to strengthen their case by affirming that many religions of the world outside of Christianity, have their traditions of a virgin birth, and the history of most primitive peoples is replete with mythical accounts of the union of gods and mortals. The implication is that the narrative contained in the new covenant scriptures also constitutes the folklore by which a simple and superstitious peasantry sought to give meaning to their belief.

There are some facts which should not be overlooked, however, by those who are concerned with arrival at truth. The first is that many of the myths contain within themselves the grounds of their own refutation. A close examination will show that a great number are not actually related to virgins at all.

One of the frequently cited cases is that of Romulus and Remus, reputed to be the sons of Mars, god of war, and Rhea Silvia, a Vestal Virgin. If these legendary twins ever existed, they were conceived in illicit intercourse, and the legend takes note of this by recounting that they were thrown into the river Tiber because of their mother's sinful alliance. To compare this with the incarnation in the gospel records appears somewhat

ridiculous.

The nature of the so-called "miracle births" in mythology is enough to prove that there is nothing divine involved in them, but that they were inventions of depraved human imagination. Every form of sexual deviation is connected with them, and many of the stories reek with licentiousness, animalism, and effeminacy. Frequently they are couched in language descriptive of brutal and insensate orgies, and invest the gods with every type and kind of human debauchery.

It was characteristic of many rulers greedy of power to claim affinity with the gods and thus enhance their ability to prey upon the ignorant and superstitious masses. Apollo seems to have been a popular claimant as a sire, with Pythagoras, Plato and the Roman emperor Augustus, all alleging him as father. Alexander the Great propagated the opinion that he was begotten of a god who approached his mother in the form of a serpent, although more accurate history makes him the son of Philip of Macedon, and of Olympias, a princess of Epirus, and places his birthplace at Pella, the capital of ancient Macedonia.

It is worth noting that in all of the myths the purpose of "miraculous births" was to exalt men to the stature of gods, while in the gospel records the incarnation was to empty one of equality with God to take upon himself the form of a slave, made in the likeness of men. Before Alexander died he ordered the Greek cities to worship him as a god, but proved he was a man by dying. Jesus proved that he was a man by dying, and the Son of God by the resurrection.

It appeals to me as a matter of common sense that, in the final analysis, the validity of the scriptural account of the conception and birth of Jesus, cannot possibly be affected by recounting the "miracle birth" stories of myths and legends. One who is prejudiced against acceptance of the virgin birth may seek to find comfort for his antagonism by citing the similarities,

remote in nature as they are, but this proves nothing pro or con about the factuality of the birth of Jesus. There is hardly a facet of authentic history that has not been duplicated either before or after the event, by fanciful myth.

But the historicity of an event cannot be invalidated by the citing of legendary similarities. The myths serve only to prove the scope of human imaginative powers. The science fiction writers two generations ago were producing such wild tales of the conquest of space that children were forbidden to read their far-out speculations. Now their grandchildren watch on television the launching into orbit of vehicles which make the stories of yesteryear laughable because of their simplicity.

That Jesus of Nazareth lived on earth is an established fact. The circumstances of his advent were carefully and meticulously investigated by a physician, who interrogated the eyewitnesses, and who then set down his findings and addressed them to a Greek political ruler. Many who lived in the century following the birth of Jesus accepted without question the testimony as given. That testimony is either true or false. But the truth or falsity of it can never be affected by any imaginative or speculative accounts preceding it, regardless of any apparent likeness.

No act of history or fact of testimony can ever be proven false by the mere citation of multiplied cases known to be spurious. Doubt may be cast upon all by association, but doubt in itself disproves nothing. It serves to show the lack of logic upon the part of one who confuses doubt with proof, when doubt itself exists because of lack of proof, or because of lack of study or examination of existing proof.

THE PROPHECY OF ISAIAH

At this juncture we come to the place where we must note a prophecy concerning the birth of Jesus as recorded in Isaiah

7:14. Honesty and candor in interpretation force us to study this in spite of the fact that we may differ with many scholars whom we greatly love and respect. We could simply ignore the passage and make no reference to it and thereby escape the wrath of some and the misunderstanding of others, but this appears to be unfair. We will risk any repercussion.

The King James Version reads, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." The Revised Standard Version reads, "Behold, a young woman shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Immanuel." This version has a footnote reading, "or virgin."

I concur with the Revised Standard Version rendering. This is not because I do not believe in the virgin birth of Jesus, but because I do. I believe that the birth of Jesus was absolutely unique. He was the only person in the history of the world who was born of a virgin.

To me, it seems quite clear that the prophecy of Isaiah has a two-fold application, as is true of so many old covenant prophecies. It has both a primary and a secondary application. The primary application was to be immediate. It was to happen shortly after the utterance of the prophecy. The secondary application was remote and in the future. It was to take place after many centuries had passed.

To shorten our approach to the matter, let me state that I believe that the son to whom direct reference was made was Isaiah's own son, Maher-shalal-hash-baz. He was not born of a virgin. The secondary application was to Jesus. He was unquestionably born of a virgin. We only ask for an impartial and unbiased examination of the scriptures directly related to both births. We crave your patience while we first investigate with you the information furnished in chapters 7 and 8 of Isaiah. If nothing else is accomplished we will share in a good lesson in Bible history.

The contextual background for this lesson goes back several hundreds of years prior to the time of Isaiah. The people of God had divided into two kingdoms during the reign of Rehoboam, the son of Solomon in 975 B. C. Ten tribes revolted and set up the kingdom of Israel, later establishing their capital at Samaria. Since this was in the tribal inheritance of Ephraim the kingdom was frequently referred to as Ephraim. The remaining two tribes of Judah and Benjamin maintained their capital at Jerusalem. Their kings continued in an unbroken line from David of the tribe of Judah.

In 759 B. C. Pekahiah was completing a two year reign over Israel in Samaria. One of his captains, Pekah the son of Remaliah, conspired against him with a band of more than fifty men from Gilead, and assassinated him in the royal palace, and after this military coup Pekah installed himself as king.

In the seventeenth year of the reign of Pekah, in 742 B. C., Jotham the king of Judah died and was succeeded by his twenty-year old son Ahaz. Isaiah was living at the time and was active as a prophet in Jerusalem. The kingdom of Syria, which joined Israel on the north, with its capital at Damascus, was governed by Rezin.

As soon as the young Ahaz came to the throne of Judah, Rezin the king of Syria and Pekah the king of Israel, entered into a plot to besiege Jerusalem and destroy the dynasty of David and install a foreigner, the son of Tabeal, in place of Ahaz. They reckoned without the fact that God had made a covenant with David that he would never lack a descendant to sit upon his throne. But as soon as the news reached the palace in Jerusalem that the kings of Israel and Syria were preparing to march against the city, Ahaz and his advisors were so frightened that they literally quaked.

At this time Isaiah had one son, whose name was Shear-jashub. God told Isaiah to take his son and go up to meet Ahaz

and reassure him. The very name of his son was a sign of God's protective care, and that name had been purposely given. It meant, "The remnant shall return." Shear-jashub had been so named to comfort Judah with the thought that they would not be exterminated.

Ahaz was inspecting the water supply of Jerusalem, probably in preparation for an anticipated siege, and Isaiah and his son met the king at the conduit of the upper pool along the Fuller's Field highway. Isaiah informed Ahaz that he should remain calm and not be scared of "the two tails of these smoking fire-brands." This designation of Rezin and Pekah indicated that they were but two flaming sticks and that God could easily extinguish them. Isaiah pointed out that they would not succeed in overthrowing Ahaz because he was protected by the promise to David and God had revealed concerning the prophecy, "It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass."

The prophet went on to predict that Damascus and Syria would be rendered helpless and that within a period of sixty-five years the ten tribe kingdom would be destroyed until it could no longer even be counted as a people. Apparently the young king was too frightened to trust in this prediction, because Isaiah said, "Do you not believe? It is because you are not stable," that is established in and trusting the promises of God. In order to produce faith God requested Ahaz to ask for a sign that Isaiah was indeed conveying a divine message.

Isaiah said to the king, "Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven." This simply meant that Ahaz was free to request any phenomenon which could be demonstrated in the created universe. He could ask for divine assurance through any kind of a sign which would indicate God's faithfulness to His covenant promises.

But Ahaz, who had been worshiping heathen gods and burning incense unto them in the high places, suddenly turned

very devout and replied, "I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test." And the prophet said, "Hear then, O house of David. Is it too little for you to weary men, that you worry my God also?" Ahaz had refused to listen to the counsel of Isaiah and his son, and now he stubbornly refused to ask a sign of God to confirm the promise that the king of Syria and the king of Israel would be destroyed and the theocracy would continue to govern through the house of David.

Then the prophet uttered the prediction with which we are especially concerned. "Even though you refuse to ask for a sign, the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, a young woman shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel . . . For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted."

I submit that this sign to Ahaz that God will destroy the two kings who were a threat to Jerusalem is as plain as language can make it. A young woman would conceive a son who was to be a sign to Ahaz and Judah, and before that child reached the age of accountability the enemy lands were to be divested of their kings. In spite of the plainness of the passage many have been so conditioned by their previous teaching that they will not be able to see it without meticulous explanation. We ask the indulgence of our readers as we make a detailed exegesis.

1. This sign was given to Ahaz at a time of apparent crisis. It was to prove to him that God would not allow the seed of David to be displaced or replaced by a usurper, like the son of Tabeal. The sign was given to Ahaz for it was he who refused to request a sign. It had to be something that he could see in his day, else it would not have been a sign to him as promised.

2. A young woman would conceive and bear a son who would be a sign to God's people that God was with Judah and Jerusalem and that the conspirators against them would not

succeed. His name was to be called Immanuel, which means "God with us," that is with the house of David, as opposed to Israel and Syria. This was in accord with the promise which God made to David, "I will raise up your offspring after you, one of your own sons, and I will establish his kingdom . . . I will be his father, and he shall be my son . . . I will confirm him in my house and in my kingdom forever and his throne will be established forever." What was to happen to the conspirators within the period of infancy of one child would be proof that God was not slack concerning his promise!

3. Concerning the child it was said, "He shall eat curds and honey when he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good." Curds and honey were eaten in time of peace and plenty. God spoke of Canaan as a land that flowed with curds and honey when he wanted to illustrate the wealth and productivity of it. But at the time Isaiah made this prediction Rezin and Pekah were marching toward Jerusalem to lay siege to the city. Ahaz was frightened at the thought of the coming calamity, but the prophet declares that instead of privation, starvation and hardship, a child conceived at that time would eat the very best of foods by the time he reached the age of accountability.

Nothing could be more indicative of the coming failure of Rezin and Pekah than to predict that the inhabitants of Jerusalem would be feasting on the richest diet in the next several years in spite of their attempted siege.

4. Ahaz was informed that before the time when the son borne by the young woman was at the age of discretion, "the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted." A child conceived in 742 B. C. would not be born until nine months later, or about 741. In 2 Kings 16:5 we learn that the siege against Jerusalem in 742 B. C. was unsuccessful. In 740 B. C. (when the child would be about a year old, Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria captured Damascus, carried the people into exile and killed Rezin. The next year, 739 B. C., Hoshea made a

conspiracy against Pekah and killed him in Samaria. At this time the child would be about two years old. The two smoking tails of firebrands were to be extinguished before the child was able to choose the good and refuse the evil.

Even before Pekah died Tiglath-pileser swooped down upon Israel and carried away the inhabitants of a great part of it including Gilead, Galilee and Naphtali. You may read of this in 2 Kings 15:29. The two kings were gone and the land deserted before the child was much more than two years old.

5. We must remember that Isaiah also predicted the breaking of Ephraim so the kingdom could no longer be called a people. After Hoshea assassinated Pekah he reigned six years before Shalmaneser, then king of Assyria, tired of his rebellion against the imposed tribute, came up and laid siege to Samaria. The siege lasted three years until 721 B. C. when the city fell and Israel was carried into exile because of their idolatry.

IDENTITY OF THE CHILD

Now we come to the most interesting part of our narrative — the identity of the young woman and the son who was given as a sign to Ahaz and Judah. We believe that the context shows that the young woman was the prophetess, that is, the wife of Isaiah and that the son whom she conceived and bore as a sign was Maher-shalal-hash-baz, the second son of Isaiah.

In order to guarantee that this sign would be understood by future generations as well as the one then in existence, Isaiah was instructed to take a scroll and write in it, using common letters that could be understood by all, "Testimony concerning Maher-shalal-hash-baz." This name means "The spoil speeds; the prey hastes" (Isaiah 8:1). The indication was that God would speedily spoil the conspirators and haste to make them a prey to divine vengeance.

After penning this testimony Isaiah called two witnesses to attest it with their signatures, so it could be proven in the mouth of these two that the testimony was written before the child was conceived. After the testimony was duly certified Isaiah went in unto the prophetess, his wife, and she conceived and bore a son, exactly as it had been foretold to Ahaz. When the child arrived the Lord told Isaiah to call his name Maher-shalal-hash-baz, "for before the child shall have knowledge to cry, My father, and my mother, the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria shall be taken away before the king of Assyria." We have already learned that the child was not over a year old when Tiglath-pileser despoiled both territories.

But what about the name Immanuel? It was distinctly said that the young woman who conceived and bore the child shall call his name "Immanuel." The answer lies in the fact that this was a prophetic term used because of its meaning. The literal name of the child was Maher-shalal-hash-baz, but he was called "Immanuel" because his birth was a sign that God was with Judah and the house of David. Later the same could be said about Jesus. Although he was referred to as "Immanuel" his literal name was Jesus, but his advent signified that God was with mankind in a new and unique way.

Let us see if this can be substantiated with reference to the first child. It is significant that the word "Immanuel" occurs in the King James Version only twice as a proper name. Once is in Isaiah 7:14 where the name was to be given to the son borne by the young woman, and the other is in the same context, in Isaiah 8:8, in the chapter dealing with the birth of Maher-shalal-hash-baz. But it also occurs in the same chapter in its translated form. The first occurrence (8:8) is one of the most interesting in the word of God.

In 8:5 the Lord tells Isaiah that the people of Israel had refused the waters of Siloam that flowed gently and rejoiced in Rezin and Pekah, who were firebrands and revolutionaries.

Siloam was a small stream and pool which helped Jerusalem to survive by furnishing water for the inhabitants. But the people of the northern kingdom had turned away from the city where God had written His name and now placed their trust in men.

"Now therefore, behold the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria and all his glory." The waters of the Euphrates were wide and turbulent, and unlike the water of Siloam. Since the ten tribes had shown a preference for such turbulence God promised them that he would send the fierce nation from the region of the Euphrates and the army would be like a river at flood stage. "He shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks, and he shall pass through Judah; he shall overflow and go over, he shall reach even unto the neck."

All of this came to pass and the armies of the Assyrians inundated the land of Syria and the land of Israel, and flowed over into the land of Judah. There they were halted by the direct action of God and returned to their banks. The land of Judah is referred to as that of Immanuel in verse 8. God was with Judah but he was not with her attackers.

In verses 9 and 10 the conspiring nations are challenged to associate together, far countries are urged and challenged to gird for battle, and all are told to counsel together, but still it would come to nought. "Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces; and give ear all of ye far countries: gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces. Take counsel and it shall not stand: for God is with us (Immanuel)." This coincides with the promise to Ahaz about the conspiracy, "Thus saith the Lord God, It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass" (7:7).

What did Isaiah do with the scroll, or testimony which he had written? He was told to "Bind up the testimony, seal the teaching among my disciples" (8:16). This meant that in the

presence of those who had been taught concerning God's purpose as demonstrated in the son born to the young woman, he was to roll up the evidence which had been signed by Uriah and Zechariah, and he was to place a seal upon it.

Isaiah then declared, "Behold, I and the children whom the Lord has given me are for signs and portents in Israel from the Lord of hosts who dwells on Mount Zion" (8:18). The children whom God had given Isaiah were Shear-jashub and Maher-shalal-hash-baz. When Isaiah was sent to reassure the frightened Ahaz he was told to take his first son with him. The very name of this lad should have strengthened the king, but when he doubted, another son was promised who would be a definite sign from the Lord. "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you (Ahaz) a sign; Behold, a young woman shall conceive and bear a son, and his very name will mean that God is with us."

God promised a son as a sign to Ahaz and Judah. After Isaiah had carefully inscribed a roll with this information he went in unto his wife and she conceived and bore a son. Isaiah then positively declared that he and the children which God gave him were signs and portents in Israel. We fail to see how it could be made any plainer that the son of the prophet was the sign given to Ahaz and Jerusalem.

What purpose was to be achieved by preservation of the sealed and attested witness concerning the son who had been promised and the destruction of Syria and Samaria before the child came to the age of discretion? The answer is plainly given. It was to be a constant reminder in time of national danger to rely upon the Lord instead of upon other advisers and counsellors. The common tendency of people when rumors of attack were rife was to consult spirit mediums or necromancers and seek to learn from the spirit world what was going to happen. Instead, Israel was to turn to the sealed teaching and testimony as a sign that God would not desert Judah.

"And when they say to you, 'Consult the mediums and the wizards who chirp and mutter,' should not a people consult their God? Should they consult the dead on behalf of the living? To the teaching and to the testimony! If they do not speak in harmony with this message it is because they are unenlightened" (Isaiah 8:19, 20). The context plainly shows that the teaching and testimony consisted of the scroll relating to the birth of the second son of Isaiah.

We do not believe that the young woman who conceived and bore the son who was to be a sign to Ahaz was a virgin. She was the wife of the prophet and had already borne one son, Shear-jashub, who was a sign and portent to the house of Jacob.

A great many students have been betrayed, by their zeal to defend the virgin birth of Jesus, into adopting an interpretation which will make for two virgin births, and thus destroy the uniqueness of the birth of Jesus. All of these overlook one prime factor. In the case of Jesus, the nature of the birth was essential to establishing his deity and thus of fulfilling God's purpose.

But in the case of the sign given to reassure Ahaz, the nature of the birth had little to do with the reason. The question concerned the time element involved in destroying two kings who were plotting to overthrow Ahaz and set up a usurper in Jerusalem. The sign was not *how* a child was to be conceived and born, but the fact that a child conceived at that time would eat the bread of peace and prosperity rather than the scraps of siege and famine, and that by the time the child would attain the age of discretion the hated land would be forsaken of both her kings.

In the sign which God promised directly to Ahaz miraculous conception and a virgin birth were not requisite to the divine purpose at all. The manner of conception was not the issue but the swift and speedy vengeance of God upon cruel conspirators before a child grew out of its infancy.

I am firm in my conviction that Jesus was born of a virgin and was the only person in all human history to be so born. There were not two virgin births, one in the days of Ahaz and another in the days of Herod the Great. I would believe in the virgin birth of Jesus if Isaiah had never lived or written. Unfortunately, a great many who are so influenced by tradition and emotion that they have not taken the time or trouble to investigate in depth, rush to the defence of the language of a prophetic statement and hinge their whole theory of inspiration upon a single English word used to translate a Hebrew original. It is thought that this is being true to God in defence of the virgin birth.

In reality this is probably an exhibition of lack of faith. To chain God to a translation in the days of Isaiah and deny that He has a right to make another application of His language or to infuse the body of prophecy with a secondary and greater application does not commend itself to me personally as being a demonstration of faith in either the power of God or the wisdom of God.

I happen to believe that the same Spirit which spoke through Isaiah also spoke through Matthew and Luke. I do not doubt the ability of God nor question His right to take any message that He has ever delivered and invest it with new meaning to accomplish His purpose. It can be proven beyond doubt that this procedure was actually followed with most of the prophecies which came to be applied to Jesus. Many of these had an original and limited application, but were given a new and broader application when referred to Jesus. We cannot refer to all of them but we will suggest a few.

1. Matthew says that Joseph, Mary and Jesus, remained in Egypt until the death of Herod that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet saying, "Out of Egypt have I called my son" (Matthew 2:15). This is a quotation from Hosea 11:1 which directly related to the deliverance of Israel

from Egyptian bondage. No one who read this prophecy in the days of Hosea would ever dream that it was even remotely related to bringing Jesus back into the land of Palestine to reside in Nazareth. We would never have made this secondary application without the explanation as given by Matthew.

2. When Herod sent and slew the children in Bethlehem, Matthew writes, "Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not" (Matthew 2:17, 18). Actually, Jeremiah originally had no reference to the slaughter of the innocents.

Ramah was the headquarters in Palestine for the king of Babylon. There he assembled the exiles for deportation to a foreign land beyond the Euphrates. The lamentation and bitter weeping of these displaced persons reminded the prophet of the sorrow of Rachel who died in childbirth and was buried along the road near Bethlehem, after giving birth to her second son whom she called Benoni, "son of my sorrow." When the children were slain at Bethlehem the wails were so loud it was as if they could be heard in Ramah, and as if Rachel were once again screaming in anguish for her loved ones.

3. Again Matthew declares that Jesus lived in a city called Nazareth, "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene." Of course this expression is not found in our old covenant scriptures, although Matthew says it was spoken by the prophets (plural). The word *Nazareth* **is from the same Hebrew root as the word for "branch" and the allusion here is to the words of Isaiah (11:1); Jeremiah (23:5); and Zechariah (3:8), etc.**

4. When David prepared to build the temple and was restrained from doing so by Nathan, he was told that God would raise up his seed, and "he shall build me an house, and I will

establish his throne for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son" (1 Chronicles 17:12, 13). David summoned Solomon and directly applied this prediction unto him (1 Chronicles 22:9, 10). Yet Peter said on Pentecost, "Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne, he seeing this before spoke of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption" (Acts 2:30, 31).

5. Of just as much interest is an application made in Hebrews 2:13 of the words of Isaiah about his sons, Shear-jashub and Maher-shalal-hash-baz. Isaiah said, "Behold I and the children which God hath given me are for signs and portents." The writer of the Hebrew letter drops the latter part of the sentence and makes the remainder applicable to Jesus and the saints. "Behold I and the children which God hath given me."

The higher critic will point to these places as indications of the arbitrary manipulation of scripture in order to justify a theory or bolster a supposition. But it must not be forgotten that the critics also frequently have a presupposition which they seek to establish and they are not above assigning motives to Biblical writers without proper grounds for so doing.

To one who believes in divine prescience and recognizes the right of Cod to interpret revelation, as I do, no problem is presented at all. The simplest statement may have a deeper meaning than man could ever imagine and God can reveal that deeper meaning as well as the original message. I refuse to limit the meaning God attaches to a statement by my understanding of it.

The real problem with the virgin birth has never been the virgin birth at all. Rather it has to do with the nature of the God in whom one believes. If one recognizes God as omnipotent and

omniscient as I do, the virgin birth presents no difficulties. Nothing is impossible to the God whom I serve. As the author of all life and the ruler of all nature he can bring human life into existence by any means commensurate with his purpose. I believe that he has done so by four different means: direct creation from elements previously created; from a part removed from a human body by divine surgery; by natural reproduction; and by impregnation of a human ovum through agency of the Holy Spirit. I think that a great many in our day who rebel against the thought of the virgin birth because of what they term "the intellectual barrier," do not stop to analyze the relationship of their doubt to either the antecedents or consequences. The only way by which a divine personage could enter the realm of humanity and actually partake of human flesh would be by a miracle. If the fulness of deity was to dwell bodily in Jesus he could not be simply a product of a natural procreative process. If he had both a human father and a human mother he was no more the Son of God than any other person. The divine Sonship is clearly predicated upon divine begetting. "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Almighty will overshadow you, therefore the holy thing which is begotten shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35).

It will be obvious, I think, that the views which we have expressed indicate that as respects the virgin birth, at least, we concur with the rendering of the Revised Standard Version. Because of the prominence of the attacks made upon this particular version on the very point at issue in this thesis, there needs to be some clarification.

I have no favorite version. I use a great many of them, and one of my favorite methods of study is to open up a number of versions to the same passage and examine them all. I am not at all interested in defending one version against another but I am solely concerned with an unprejudiced attempt to arrive at the truth revealed by God. There are some weak spots apparent in all of the translations which it is hoped may be corrected in

future attempts at revision.

We believe that the context of Isaiah 7:14, coupled with the announced purpose of the sign to Ahaz favors the rendering "a young woman." We believed that way before the Revised Standard Version was published. We honor the translators for the footnote reading, "Or virgin." No doubt this was added because, in spite of the context, it must be admitted that the Hebrew *almah*, used seven times in the scriptures, generally implies a virgin.

Too, the Septuagint Version with which the translators were quite familiar, used the Greek word *parthenos* in Isaiah 7:14. But it is significant that in every instance in the new covenant scriptures where the birth of Christ is unmistakably under consideration, the Revised Standard Version is true to the idea of a virgin birth.

"When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 1:18).

"All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel" (Matthew 1:22, 23).

"When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took his wife, but knew her not until she had borne a son; and he called his name Jesus" (Matthew 1:24).

"In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary" (Luke 1:26, 27).

With these plain quotations before us, for one to affirm that the Revised Standard Version *denies the virgin birth* is a

demonstration of rather audacious ignorance or of a wilful intent to deceive. Surely those who make such claims must rely upon the hope that those who listen to them will never read for themselves. And they may be right!

While I am not a particular defender of this version of the scriptures as opposed to others I must confess that I have never found it in any sense prejudiced against the virgin birth of Jesus Christ. Instead, it upholds that teaching without doubt or quibble. I agree with its translation, both in the original prophecy and in the application as made to Jesus.

The direct connection between the prophecy of Isaiah and the birth of Jesus is easily understandable. Isaiah was to give a sign to Ahaz in a time of crisis that God was with the family of David and would not permit his kingly covenant to be abrogated by the designs of men. Jesus was the natural inheritor of David's throne and was destined to sit upon it as an heir of David, so a prophecy related to the preservation of that throne was applicable to Jesus who was proof from heaven that God was with us.

I have read a great many books by those who would cast doubt on the possibility of the virgin birth. I have earnestly sought to understand their position and motivation. But each time I have returned and read the scriptural account once more, and the more I read it the more steadfast does my faith become. I accept the virgin birth of Jesus as a fact and reality and it is very precious unto me. I am grateful that when He decided to visit us and share our lot that He passed through every phase of our personal experience, embryonic, foetal, and otherwise. I am thrilled that, as a babe, he entered the world as I entered it, gasping for that first precious breath of air that spelled life on our planet.

And I am pleased that he was a firstborn son and that his tiny body caught up in the convulsions and throes of the

expulsion process called delivery, paved the way for the sons and daughters of Joseph who followed. I accept the truth that the mother who bore him knew the ecstasy of divine union before she experienced the paroxysm of physical and sensual orgasm. I acknowledge the validity of the virgin birth and I believe in the one who entered our sinful world through this medium. To me he is the Son of God, and my blessed Savior. I love him with simple, trusting faith!

The Case For Miracles

Contents

Did Jesus of Nazareth once feed a throng of five thousand men, besides women and children by direct multiplication of five loaves and two fish? Did he later repeat the action with four thousand men plus women and children? Did he calm the waves of the Sea of Galilee with a spoken word? Did he raise the daughter of Jairus, the young man of Nain, and Lazarus of Bethany, from the dead?

Are these legends which grew up as men told about his activities? Is the language employed in the realm of myth? Must we strip it off and seek for the kernel of fact hidden within it?

In simple trusting faith I accept the accounts as historical and factual. I am quite content to discuss them as genuine miracles. Miracles have to do with demonstrations of power and the God whom I serve is unlimited in power. That is why the word "miracles" is used for our benefit. There are no miracles with God for what appears supernatural to us is merely natural to Him. There can be no power above or beyond the source of all power. Nothing is "super" to one who is over all. But since the terms related to miracles are employed for our benefit perhaps we should seek to understand those terms for by doing so we can learn something of the nature of miracles.

The first word we shall note is "wonders." This has to do with the effect of the miracle upon the beholder. The act performed is strange and excites amazement. Here the effect is

put for the cause and the act is termed a wonder, although it should be remarked that the original is always translated in the plural. The astonishment betokens both the nature of the act and the limitations of the one so affected. Certainly the arousing of amazement is not the chief aim, perhaps not even a lesser aim, of the miracle but it can be used to testify of the nature of the act. It provides another way by which God's strength is exhibited in our weakness.

It is possible that we have lessened the force of "wonders" by our common usage. We say that a man who remodels an old house "worked wonders" with it; or that a woman who designs her own dresses "worked wonders" with the material. In such cases the result is a matter of skill rather than of power, and it is extraordinary because of aptitude rather than supernatural endowment. We are prone to mistake commendation and approval for the sense of awe and amazement with which men view a real miracle.

Let us take a miracle of Jesus for an example. When he came to Capernaum upon one occasion the news rapidly circulated that he was at home. People came from every quarter in such numbers that they filled the house and barred the way to the door. Four men carrying a paralytic could not get close so they lifted the cripple to the roof, removed a sufficient number of tiles and let him down in the immediate presence of Jesus. Upon beholding this demonstration of their faith Jesus at once declared that the man's sins were forgiven. Some of the scribes were present and these questioned in their hearts if Jesus was not guilty of blasphemy by assuming the power of God to forgive sins.

Jesus pointed out to them that it was much easier to tell a man his sins were forgiven than to tell him to arise and walk. The bystanders could not tell whether one had succeeded in forgiving sins but they could immediately detect any failure to cure his infirmity. Jesus then rested his power to forgive sins in a

physical demonstration and instructed the man to take up his pallet and go home. Immediately the man arose, took up his pallet and walked out in the presence of them all. It is written, "So that all were amazed and glorified God, saying, 'We never saw anything like this.'" It was such an effect which caused the word "wonders" to be used.

It may be argued that there is nothing in such an effect which indicates supernatural power, and this is correct when the term is used by itself. One who has dwelt all his life upon the plains may feel a sense of awe when he first surveys the lofty snow-covered peaks of a lordly mountain range. Another may have the same sensation when he stands upon the ocean beach and sees the rolling swells foam themselves out in breakers at his feet. In many such experiences we may say, "We never saw anything like this." For this reason it is well to remember that the word "wonders" never appears as a designation of miracles by itself. Every other term is used upon occasion without an accompanying expression but "wonders" is always employed in conjunction with others.

The effect upon the observer is not the primary purpose of the acts. They were not done simply to startle, frighten or amaze the onlookers. The fact that they did so indicates that they were outside the realm of previous knowledge of those who beheld them, and could be measured by no law with which they were familiar. Thus they were calculated to secure attention to the message upon the part of those who saw and who gathered close to those who performed the acts. (Cp. Acts 3:10, 11).

SIGNS

Those who go forth on a mission representing a sovereign are expected to produce the necessary credentials to validate their authority. One who claims to represent a natural realm requires only natural certification; one who is an envoy of a

supernatural power must exhibit supernatural credentials. The word "signs" is thus employed to designate miracles which are demonstrations to prove the divine mission of one who performs them.

Since men in the ages prior to Christ were dispatched as representatives of God we would expect God to grant them the power to perform such acts as would prove their claims to be legitimate. A good example is found in the case of Moses. After he had been in the land of Midian for forty years God prepared to send him back to Egypt to deliver His people. He had to establish himself both in the eyes of the Israelites and of Pharaoh. Accordingly it is said, "Then Moses and Aaron gathered together all the elders of the people of Israel. And Aaron spoke all the words which the Lord had spoken to Moses and did the signs in the sight of the people. And the people believed."

God knew that Pharaoh would demand supernatural proof that Moses was sent as his ambassador so we read, "And the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, 'When Pharaoh says to you, Prove yourselves by working a miracle, then you shall say to Aaron, Take your rod and cast it down before Pharaoh that it may become a serpent'" (Exodus 7:9).

The apostles were ambassadors of Christ and God made his appeal through them (2 Corinthians 5:20). For this reason the apostle writes, "The signs of a true apostle were performed among you in all patience, with signs and wonders and mighty works" (2 Corinthians 12:12).

When Jesus cleared the temple of commercial hucksters and money-changers on the basis that they were desecrating his Father's house, the Jews said to him, "What sign have you to show us for doing this?" (John 2:18). Upon one occasion the Pharisees and Sadducees came to test him by asking him to show them a sign from heaven. He reminded them that when it was

evening they predicted fair weather because the sky was red, and when it was morning they predicted stormy weather when the sky was the same color. He said, "You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times."

This is an interesting criticism. These men had learned from observation that the face of the sky betokened certain conditions, but they were not as careful in their evaluation of history, else they would have seen the prophecy of God being fulfilled in their day. The oracles of God which they diligently studied had come as a revelation from heaven and constituted a sign of God's purpose, but their lives were not ordered by it.

When Jesus declared that "an evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign," he did not imply, as so many think, that they were evil *because* they asked for a sign. But they had God's revelation which they ignored and thus were guilty of evil and adultery contrary to God's law which was a sign unto them. To ask for a sign from heaven while trampling under foot the covenant of heaven was gross hypocrisy. Thus Jesus said to them, "It is Moses who accuses you, upon whom you have set your hope. If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote of me" (John 5:46).

Of those who reject the miracles of Christ we have a perfect right to demand that they specify the kind of proof one would need to present who claimed to be the Son of God sent down from heaven. Granted that one came who professed to be from heaven, what credentials would be demanded of him? Would it not be necessary for him to do such things as man, unaided by direct divine endowment, could not possibly do? Would not his acts have to be such as transcended all human experience? To reject the miracles of Jesus because they are incredible when measured by human performance is ridiculous. It is this very quality which makes them valid for the purpose for which they were intended.

MIGHTY WORKS

Our word "dynamic" comes from the Greek *dunamis*, which also gives us our English words dynamo and dynamite. This is the word which is translated by "miracle" in Acts 2:22; 19:11; 1 Corinthians 12:28; and Galatians 3:5. It is rendered "wonderful works" in Matthew 7:22, and "mighty works" in other places.

***Dunamis* signifies inherent power, that is, the power which belongs to a person or thing by reason of the nature of that person or thing. All power is of God and the performance of those works or deeds which are beyond the ability of the one who does them signifies that he is endowed of God for such special work.**

It is sometimes argued that since all nature is a source of wonder to the one who beholds it, and is a demonstration of divine power, there is no such thing as a miracle. All is either miracle, or nothing is. It is true that there are many forces in operation about us which we cannot understand or measure. We are caused to wonder at the power which we call gravitation, an arbitrary term we have coined to designate something we do not comprehend, and the same is true with electrical energy and magnetic force. By observation and experiment we have learned that these proceed by what we call "laws" and we can define those "laws" and anticipate action and reaction in harmony with them.

Even those who are not versed in knowledge of energy are fully aware of the marvels of the common-place. The planting of a tiny seed is the prelude to a bursting forth of a beautiful flower. A small acorn develops into a stately oak. A black cow eats green grass and produces white milk with yellow butter in it. Various kinds of animal life eat the same substance, yet it is converted into hair, wool or feathers depending upon the kind of animal or bird. Even the process of human procreation and

birth has much about it to produce awe in the heart of one who meditates upon it.

Since we are all directly and constantly involved in and with phenomena which are mysterious it is reasoned that we have no right to separate or set apart certain events or incidents and label them "miracles." Those who seek a reply for this are often trapped by their own desire for distinction into the hasty conclusion that what we call natural is not wonderful. Nothing could be farther from the truth. The multiplication of fish by the spawning process so that two can produce enough to feed a multitude, or the increase of grain a hundredfold from the seed implanted in the soil, is as much a demonstration of divine power as the act of Jesus in feeding the throngs in his day. It is not that one is less a mighty work than the other; it is simply that one is different from the other.

In one case there is the constant manifestation of power to all men everywhere. In the other there is a specific breakthrough for a definite purpose. One has as its chief design the constant sustenance of life, the other has the added purpose of being a sign leading to faith in the one who intervenes.

This will be a good time to point out the fallacy involved in saying that a miracle is *contrary* to the laws of nature. In the first place the expression "laws of nature" may be without foundation in fact. If it means that God drew up or designed certain codes or well-defined rules by which to govern nature we know of nothing which indicates it. God, who made the universe, controls it by the constant application of the same power which formed it. He upholds all things by the word of his power. By him all things consist. He is a God of order and consistency and his power is applied with such regularity and continuity that it appears unto us as if it were being channeled by well-defined legal actions or axioms. We speak of "laws of nature" as another, and human way, of expressing the divine will. It is that will which we see operating.

Miracles are not contradictory to "the laws of nature" for this would make them contrary to the will of God. They are simply applications of divine power upon a higher level or plane. The power of God operates upon three such levels, and we designate them natural, providential and supernatural. When an aircraft which has been flying at ten thousand feet is ordered to fly at fifteen thousand feet, it does not contradict its flight at a lower level, for the levels are parallel and do not bisect each other. It does not alter its goal or destination.

When Jesus restored the withered hand of the man on the sabbath, he was not acting in violation of nature. This was exactly what the physicians would attempt to accomplish by use of natural skills and remedies. It was the crippling condition which was contrary to nature. God made man to employ all of his members and functions. This is the normal state. When one is unable to use an arm that is abnormal. Thus Jesus was acting in harmony with the natural and not in opposition to it.

The temporary suspension of a "law of nature" by exertion of a superior force or power is not a violation of the rules of nature for there is an obvious law to govern all laws— that when a greater power is brought to bear the lesser must always give place. In the old covenant scriptures we have the case of the man who borrowed an axe and while chopping near a stream the head of the axe flew off and into the water. The prophet stretched his rod over the water and the axe floated up and on the surface. The law of gravity was temporarily suspended or reversed, but this was not the violation of the law. The authority which provides or prescribes a law may make application of that law to accomplish good, which should be the purpose of all law.

The turning of the water into wine was simply increasing the tempo of nature. All wine results from water which has been drawn from the soil into the globules or containers called grapes. It is then extracted and allowed to condition itself by fermentation. Jesus accomplished in a moment what otherwise

required several months but the natural process and the miracle produced the same result, so one did not act contrary to, or in opposition to the other.

Since this little volume is designed to be a testimony of personal faith, it is essential that we devote some attention to those who object to miracles as impossibilities or absurdities. One cannot ignore the attacks and be honest with himself. Faith is not strengthened by closing the eyes but by opening them. If the shield will not quench the fiery darts it is of no value. The user cannot employ a shield properly by hiding it from the arena of conflict. The shield of faith was not intended for a museum but for the battlefield.

Perhaps the most influential antagonist of miracles was the Scottish philosopher, David Hume, who was born in Edinburgh in 1711. His writings were accepted with tremendous joy and acclaim by the skeptical world. It is not too much to say that a great deal of the opposition to miracles in our own day is simply a repetition of his arguments. Perhaps one thing that has encouraged the popularity of his views is that, once adopted, all need for examination of the Bible and its record of miracles is rendered unnecessary. This approach will commend itself to those who wish to doubt without taking the trouble to personally investigate the evidence. All they need to do is to assume the postulate of Hume and all need for examination is rendered useless. The position of Hume is summarized in the statement, "No conceivable amount of testimony can prove a miracle."

A summary of his argument can be gleaned from the Encyclopedia Britannica, which records it in these words:

> **Our belief of any fact from the testimony of eye-witnesses is derived from no other principle than our experience of the veracity of human testimony. If the fact attested be miraculous, there arises a contest of two opposite experiences, or proof against proof. Now, a miracle is a violation of the laws of nature; and, as firm**

> **and unalterable experience has established these laws, the proof against a miracle, from the very nature of the fact, is as complete as any argument from experience can possibly be imagined; and if so, it is an undeniable consequence, that it cannot be surmounted by any proof whatever, derived from human testimony.**

Mr. Hume has been acknowledged as one of the most ingenious writers who has ever entered the lists to contest against miracles. Dr. George Campbell, of Aberdeen, who was a contemporary of Hume, and who wrote "A Dissertation on Miracles," in reply to his thesis, said, "The Essay on Miracles deserves to be considered as one of the most dangerous attacks that have been made on our religion." The reader who is interested in historical aspects will find it interesting to read the letters exchanged by these philosophers. They are models of courtesy and restraint when one considers the explosive atmosphere in which they were written.

Our own approach will be rather simple. I am not a philosopher and do not possess the ability for deep philosophical penetration. It is obvious that if one admits the premises of Hume his conclusions will follow. But we believe there are some fallacious assumptions which, once recognized, will demonstrate the emptiness of his attack.

For instance, what is meant by the expression "Our belief of any fact from the testimony of eye-witnesses is derived from no other principle, than our experience of the veracity of human experience"? This is the foundation of the whole structure of attack on miracles. Miracles are regarded as contrary to experience and for that reason are opposed to the very grounds or bases of evidence, and thus are destructive of themselves by negation of the evidence.

Hume declared, "The very same principle of experience, which gives us a certain degree of assurance in the testimony of witnesses, gives us also, in this case, another degree of assurance,

against the fact which they endeavor to establish; from which contradiction there necessarily arises a counterpoise, and mutual destruction of belief and authority."

To what experience are miracles contrary? It is not enough to say they are contrary to *personal* experience for the question under consideration is the testimony, not of our own senses, but of eye-witnesses. Moreover, the thesis of Hume is that they are contrary to our experience of the veracity of human testimony. This is the experience upon which all faiths must rest according to the philosopher, therefore, it is this experience to which miracles must be opposed if the credibility of miracles is to be destroyed.

But this is a little absurd. The very discussion about miracles arises because men have testified that they have observed or experienced such. If there had never been an allegation that miracles occurred there would have been no well-designed opposition to them by Hume and others. That miracles have been a historical fact has been made a part of human testimony. To deny that testimony without showing its invalidity due to the character of the witnesses, or the nature of the testimony, is not to destroy miracles, for they are untouched by such a procedure. Rather it is to destroy our experience of the veracity of human testimony, the very foundation claimed for the skeptical superstructure.

Is it a fact that our belief of testimony is founded upon our experience of its veracity? We think not, and if we are correct, the opposition falls because of a fallacy in its main support. All we need to do to show its utter weakness is to demonstrate that there are those whose experience is at a minimum and yet who act upon testimony given, in full belief. No better example can be given than that of a little child. Without experience of the veracity of testimony it proceeds upon faith. The child abstains from that which it is told is harmful or poisonous; it partakes of that which it is told is helpful. It accepts this testimony without

previous experience. Indeed, as it grows older and has increasing experience, it comes more and more to doubt the veracity of human testimony, so when it has the least experience it has the greatest trust in human testimony, and when it has the greatest experience it tends to have a lesser degree of trust in it.

The predication of Hume fails also upon another count in his assumption that a miracle is a violation of the laws of nature and is, therefore, contrary to experience. We have already shown that a miracle is not a violation of the laws of nature. It may be a deviation from such laws as we know, but it is actually in harmony with the nature of the law which regulates the laws of nature, that is, in the application of a superior power or force that which is lesser must give place. So far from this being contrary to the laws of nature it is actually basic to the harmonious functioning of nature.

How can a miracle be *contrary* to our experience? That it may be outside the range or scope of our experience can readily be granted, but this is vastly different from saying it is opposed to our experience. A dweller in the tropics who has never experienced freezing temperatures or seen a snowfall cannot say that a land of ice is opposed to his experience. It is simply beyond it.

For the miracle of feeding the five thousand to be contrary to one's experience he would have had to be present and witnessed that the fish and loaves were not multiplied and no food was distributed to the hungry multitude. For the miracle of healing the withered hand to be contrary to one's experience he would have had to be present and observe that there was no change wrought in the cripple. One would need to experience the opposite of a miracle for that miracle to be opposite to his experience.

Our experience can never be made the criterion for measuring the validity of any claim which lies outside of, or

beyond it. To be a universal measure our experience would need to be absolute and unlimited, otherwise that which lay beyond its limitations could be factual without our being able to determine it. In order to exclude the possibility of miracles performed by God one would need to make himself God.

Perhaps we should turn from the skeptical criticism to the more modern attack of "rationalists," although there is clearly a case of mistaken identity here, for no one could be more irrational in many areas. We live in an age when many have assumed that the record of miracles in the Bible has no relation to historical fact. Their thesis is that Jesus did not claim to perform miraculous acts and the apostolic writers did not write an account of anything deemed to be supernatural. Their idea is that men constructed an image of Christ in their minds and then interpreted what they read to give body to this image. In this fashion they could retain the moral qualities of Jesus and the integrity of the scriptural accounts and place the responsibility for misinterpretation upon those who sought for the wonderful and supernatural.

It is at once apparent that those who thus reason have surrendered the divinity of Jesus and yet want to maintain his right to respect because of his superior human qualities. Only the superstitious would invest him with supernatural power. There is a difference between this approach and that of the more recent "mythical" school of thought and we shall make brief reference to that a little later. The rationalists who sought to hold on to the accounts of Christ have had to face some serious problems. Something had happened and a record had been made of the event. That record indicated a demonstration above and beyond the naturalistic realm. Accordingly, in facing up to the record, a great deal of maneuvering was required to explain away that which was so apparent. Gradually there evolved a rather elaborate scheme of interpretation. In this the scriptures were bent and twisted in a ridiculous fashion.

A good example is the taking of the coin from the mouth of a fish, at the instruction of Jesus, in order to pay the tribute assessed. Peter encountered the tax collectors at Capernaum who enquired about the half-shekel tax. When Peter called this to the attention of Jesus he asserted that he ought to be exempt, but said, "However, not to give offense to them, go to the sea and cast a hook, and take the first fish that comes up, and when you open its mouth you will find a shekel; take that and give it to them for me and for yourself" (Matthew 17:27).

According to the rationalists Jesus was simply telling Peter to return to his old occupation long enough to catch enough fish to pay the tax for the two of them. The Lord was supposed to have smilingly implied that Peter knew that the mouths of fishes contained the answer to all problems related to tax payments and other expenses. He used the expression as we say "straight from the horse's mouth," to indicate the authenticity of our source of information. This is the way in which men of intellectual brilliance seek to evade the power of the Son of God.

In the case of the turning of water into wine we are told that Jesus merely supplied additional wine when he learned from his mother that the celebrants at the wedding had exhausted that provided by the host. But the one who records the event declares that this was the first of his signs, that in performing it he manifested his glory, and as a result his disciples believed on him (John 2:11). Of course this would be absurd if Jesus had just sent the servants out for additional wine. Nor must we forget that it made such an impression that it was used to identify the place later on (John 4:46).

One of the most ingenious artifices is that used to explain the feeding of the multitude. It required no multiplication of bread and fish. It is assumed that those present would not be so foolish as to make no provision at all for the journey and that many had food, but when they halted, instead of bringing forth what they had, those who had provided for themselves selfishly

refrained from bringing it out lest they be forced to share with the others. Jesus and his disciples, beholding this attitude, immediately began to share their food with others and the multitude seeing this demonstration of generosity did the same, with the result that there was more than enough for all, and an excess was gathered up. It is said that the real transformation took place in the hearts of the men and women and not on the bread and fish. The subsequent references of Jesus to the event make such rationalization wholly untenable and a little bit ridiculous.

It hardly seems necessary to go through the whole list of miracles. The man at Bethesda was not really a cripple but a psychiatric case who had convinced himself that he could not walk, and gloried in the pity of the multitude. When Jesus confronted him with the question of whether or not he really wanted to be healed he was jerked back into a world of reality and arose and started homeward. Jesus did not walk on the water but on the shore and it just appeared to those in the boat that he was walking on the water. All of these are the concoctions of men who have long ago denied the power of God or his Son and must now devise some means of explaining away the accounts of that power. It is one thing to seek a way of explaining God's revelation, and a wholly different thing to explain God's revelation away.

To one who regards the revelation as a whole such piecemeal and derogatory attempts bring only contempt for the kind of scholarship which must resort to such tactics. It is in no sense of arrogance that we suggest that one who must operate by simple child-like faith will find it far easier to harmonize the scriptures than those who must expound them in such a manner as to disprove the very thing which they were written to prove. "Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples which are not written in this book, but these are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of the living God, and that believing you might have life through his name."

In more recent times we have been treated to the term "myth" as applied by some existential writers to the scriptural accounts. Foremost among these is Rudolf Bultmann whose "Kerygma and Myth" was translated into English in 1953. Unfortunately the use of the word "myth" creates a barrier to the proper understanding of what Bultmann and others were talking about and tends to preclude a careful analysis of their theory. Most of us have been conditioned, when we hear the word, to think of the stories of gods and goddesses and their misbehaving. But this is not the sense in which these theologians and philosophers employ the word.

Basically they refer to the distinction which they profess to see in the personal witness to the Christ and the language and cultural style in which that witness is couched. It is alleged that men in our day think of the world in a scientific and technical way and express themselves in a form of exactness produced by our culture. On the other hand, the apostles and their contemporaries lived in a day which preceded our scientific age and they wrote in the thought forms of their own age. It is not alleged that they invented their descriptions or that they were the results of vivid imagination. On the contrary they believed that there was an unseen realm peopled by invisible beings, angels or demons, and that these invaded the world, and they wrote out of belief of such as a reality.

It is argued that man can no longer accept the idea of what is called a three-story universe, with a spatial heaven above and an underworld beneath, and the earth containing man in the middle. For this reason he cannot longer concur in the idea of actual demons or angels. But since these were accepted in the day when the scriptures were written they must be regarded as the honest attempts of men writing to express themselves to the people of their time. These forms are called "mythical" and Bultmann proposed a divesting of the message— the kerygma— from these forms. This was translated into English by the rather cumbersome term "demythologizing."

It will at once be seen that most of the miracles would be purged in such a program. The casting out of demons, the feeding of the multitudes, the temptation in the wilderness, all of these would be eliminated. Of course the question is always posed, "What do these mean to mankind in our day? Suppose they were all given up, what would we lose?" Actually, this is not the real question at all. If we were to start giving up all that has happened in the past which seems to have no direct relevance to our lives we would strip history of a great deal of interest. But who is to determine what is significant in the past and what is not? Suppose that we should discard something as "myth" in one generation which would be found not to be myth by the next generation.

The real question is one of the authenticity and genuineness of the record and that is not to be determined by caprice or disposition. In the final analysis, nothing that has ever happened is without relevance. Everything has its antecedents and consequences and these in turn have theirs. For this reason we reject the thinking which sorts out events and scraps the accounts in the Bible on the basis of what prejudiced individuals want to dispense of or retain. We believe the miracles are vital as proof that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. We accept them without reservation. We defend them without hesitancy. Our motto in such matters and all others is, "Yea, let God be true, but every man a liar."

The Blessing of Eternal Life

Contents

I believe that eternal life dwells in the children of God now and that it is our most precious possession in the world. Life is produced by and proceeds from life. All life originates with the author or source of life. The author of life is the Eternal, the uncreated one. "For with thee is the fountain of life; in thy light do we see light" (Psalm 36:9). "He himself gives to all men life and breath and everything" (Acts 17:26).

The Greek language was rich and full. Our own English language which has had to borrow from so many sources is rather poverty-stricken by comparison. Thus we have to use the one word "life" to express the thought contained in a number of Greek words, and because this is the case we frequently overlook or do not grasp important distinctions. It is difficult to distinguish between persons who all wear identical cloaks.

The problem is augmented by the fact that in classical Greek one of these words had princely status while the others were inferior in rank; whereas, in the scriptures, one of the inferior terms has been elevated and the others suffer somewhat by comparison. This is further complicated by the fact that death, which is the natural antithesis of the inferior in classical usage, becomes the antithesis of the other in scripture when a moral element is included. Surely this offers a fruitful field of research for the thoughtful and discerning student.

The word *pneuma* is rendered "life" only once in the King

James Version, in Revelation 13:15, but since in most versions and revisions it is translated "breath," it can be eliminated from further consideration in this study. The word *psyche*, which is generally translated soul, heart, or mind, is also rendered life forty times. It is translated by "soul" 58 times. It literally refers to the animal life as an examination of all the passages in which it is contained will readily demonstrate.

By projection it can also refer to personality as W. E. Vine points out in his Expository Dictionary of New Testament words. In Luke 9:24, the term "his life" occurs twice, but the next verse says, "For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?" The expression "his life" is thus equated with "himself." Since we will be talking about something transcendently greater than animal life, or even personality, we can now dismiss this word also.

This leaves the two principal words, *bios* and *zoe*. Concerning the first, even the casual reader can ascertain from such a source as Young's Analytical Concordance that it is used for either the manner, means or period of life. It has entered the English language in such forms as biography, the history of a person's life; and biometry, a calculation of the probable duration of human life. In the new covenant scriptures it is used in all these senses of meaning. An example is found in John 3:17, "If anyone has this world's goods (bios) and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?" Here it is used for the means of life, for James points out that the things called "goods" are needful for the body (2:16).

An example of *bios* when used in relation to the improper manner of life occurs in 1 John 2:17 when we read of "the pride of life," and an example when used with reference to a proper frame of life is found in 1 Timothy 2:2, where we have the expression "a quiet and peaceable life." One of the best illustrations of the usage in connection with the period or

duration of life occurs in 1 Peter 4:3, "Let the time that is past suffice for doing what the Gentiles do." The King James version follows the manuscripts which use the term "the time past of our life."

The word with which we will be primarily concerned in this connection is *zoe*. It has also come into our vocabulary in combined forms such as zoology, zoometry, and in its transfer has come to mean, primarily, that which has to do with animals. This is unfortunate since it places a great limitation upon the term which is not characteristic of its Biblical usage.

In the word of God *zoe* is used of life as a principle, not merely as animal existence. Thus, the first time it is translated "life" in the new covenant scriptures is in the familiar words of Jesus, "For the gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few" (Matthew 7:14). The last time it appears is in Revelation 22:19, "And if any one takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which is described in this book."

When we speak of life as a principle, we are not referring to a mere principle of animation, or of power or mobility. When Jesus said, "I am come that they might have life, and have it more abundantly," he was not speaking of mere physical existence. Actually, many of those who accepted him, shortened their lives on earth because they were killed for the faith. The life of the Christ is not the life of the calendar. It is a quality of existence, not quantity. It is not length of days, or days of length, but depth of love. I like to say that the abundant life is not mere duration, but dedication; not just time, but trust; not simply continuation, but consecration.

If you will bear with us we would like to share with you some of the results of the work done by Richard Chenevix Trench in his book, "Synonyms of the New Testament," which

has gone through many editions since it was originally published in Cambridge in 1854. The author was Professor of Exegesis and New Testament at King's College, Oxford, when he wrote his memorable study. He points out that the true antithesis of *zoe* is *thanatos* (death), but that this is true only so long as life is physically contemplated. When a moral element is introduced and life is regarded as the opportunity of living nobly or otherwise, the antithesis is not between *thanatos* and *zoe*, but between *thanatos* and *bios*.

Trench shows that in the classics *bios* is the ethical word, but in the sacred scriptures this is reversed, "for no one will deny that *zoe* is there the nobler word expressing as it continually does all of the highest and best which the saints possess in God." He accounts for this by saying that only revealed religion connects death and sin in an inseparable manner, and thus automatically places life and holiness as their opposites. Where death exists, sin was there first, and life is proof that sin has never been present, or has been conquered and driven out. Where life (*zoe*) exists in an absolute sense holiness must exist in the same degree.

That will account for the fact that revelation points out that God has life in himself. He possesses life as a divine nature. It is not derived or acquired. No sin has touched or affected God. Thus his holiness is absolute, untouched or untinctured. He can say, "Be ye holy, for I am holy." To have life is not to multiply the number of heartbeats nor extend the period of breathing, but to become a partaker of the divine nature. When one becomes a partaker of this nature he becomes a partaker of eternal life, for eternal life is simply the life of God. It is our intention to state the case for the present possession of this life in systematic fashion so that all may see and understand, and also become aware of the grandeur and majesty of this promise of eternal life.

1. The Father has life in himself and has granted the Son

also to have life in himself (John 5:26). An examination of this passage will show the importance of the two little words "as" and "so." They convey the idea of equality in degree. If one can determine the degree of the first, expressed by "as," he can at once know the degree of the second as expressed by "so." Thus the Son has life even as the Father. "In him was life and the life was the light of men."

2. This life which was with the Father from the beginning, was manifested in Jesus. It was embodied, and the apostolic witnesses had audible, visual and manual contact with it. "The life was made manifest, and we saw it, and testify to it, and proclaim to you the eternal life which was with the Father and was made manifest to us" (1 John 1:2). That this was not merely the physical life of Jesus is evident in the fact that it was the eternal life which was with the Father, and further that it was proclaimed as something in which men might become participants. Those who heard the proclamation already possessed physical life as did the witnesses to whom the eternal life was manifested.

3. Men became possessors of eternal life on the basis of faith in Jesus as the Son of God. "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life" (John 3:14, 15). There is a difference in believing a person, or even believing on a person, and believing in him. One may believe on another by merely accepting the testimony concerning his existence. He may exercise such faith from a distance or as a remote experience. But to believe in one involves commitment to and identification with that one. Such belief in Jesus guarantees that one enter into life. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

4. Because the exercise of faith in Jesus make one a believer in him, and since such belief is the key to eternal life, it

is God's will that all who thus believe should have such life, the life of God himself. "For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:40). There are those who interpret this verse to mean that eternal life is future. They emphasize the word "should" and make it appear that this is merely the intention of God and that eternal life cannot be ours until after the resurrection. In a sense, this is true, for our complete enjoyment of eternal life cannot be ours during the time when we suffer in the flesh. But there is a difference between possessing a thing and being fully able to enjoy it. If a child is given a bicycle while in the hospital he has it but he cannot fully appreciate it because of present limitations.

5. In the same speech to which we have just referred Jesus plainly says, "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life" (John 6:47). Again, he says, "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God rests on him" (John 3:36). Eternal life is the present possession of the believer. The only ones who do not have eternal life are those who do not obey the Son and upon whom the wrath of God dwells.

6. If our previous reasoning is correct, it is obvious that believers have passed from death to life, for one cannot have eternal life and abide in death. That we are not mistaken is apparent from the words of Jesus. "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears my word and believes him who sent me, has eternal life; he does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life" (John 5:24). The condition here stated for crossing the frontier from death to life is to hear the word of Jesus and believe God who sent him.

But there is a tangible way by which one may know he has made the passage. "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love remains in death. Any one who hates his brother is a murderer,

and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him" (1 John 3:14, 15). We cannot wait until we are raised from the dead to love the brethren, but when we do love them we pass from death into life. We know this is life eternal because "no murderer has eternal life abiding in him," and if one who loved did not have eternal life, in this regard he would be no better than a murderer. It would be foolish for the apostle to declare that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him, if no one else has either.

We must not mistake what is here said for love of some of the brethren, or for those brethren who agree with us. Nor must we think of love as a patronizing, condescending attitude for those who differ with us. That is not love in sincerity but in hypocrisy. The real test of the love that takes us from death into life is not whether we will put up with our brethren in life but whether we would be willing to lay down our lives for the brethren. This is the criterion of the love that is under consideration. "By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (1 John 3:16).

Love is not something to be casually mouthed by those who would appear generous and benevolent because they are caught on the scriptural hook. It is a genuine willingness to die for another because, in the final analysis, brotherhood is of greater value than mere physical existence. Life without such love is not worth living because it is not eternal life at all.

7. Since eternal life is not mere duration or continuation of existence it becomes necessary that we determine just what it is, and there is no other place from which we can glean such information than from the scriptures. Before we go any farther we can affirm that eternal life is a relationship. It is a personal relationship, a human-divine relationship made possible by the fact that Jesus emptied himself and took upon him the form of a slave by coming to share our lot. When we enter that

relationship we enter into eternal life, for the relationship is life in Christ.

Jesus defined eternal life as knowing the Father and himself. "And this is eternal life, that they know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3). Because of our association of the word "know" with the mental perception that enables us to grasp certain facts, there is a danger that we will regard it in a limited sense and think of it merely as acquiring an intellectual concept of the Father and Son, that is, to know about them through the reading of the testimony that has been provided. It is true that the Greek term is thus used. It is employed with reference to "the servant who knew his master's will, but did not make ready or act according to his will" (Luke 12:47); for the universal awareness that Ephesus was the temple-keeper of the goddess Artemis (Acts 19:35); and for acquaintance with the law (Romans 7:1).

But it is also used in a much greater and deeper sense. It signifies the entering into a meaningful relationship with its object. It refers to such intimate unions as that of marriage. Indeed, the very first time the word appears in the new covenant scriptures it has this meaning. Joseph, who was engaged to Mary, was informed of the fact that she would bear a child begotten by the Holy Spirit. "When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took his wife, but knew her not until she had borne a son; and he called his name Jesus" (Matthew 1:24). When Mary was informed of this impending event she asked, "How can this be, seeing I know not a man?" (Luke 1:34). The word "know" implies a close and intimate relationship which is creative, producing new life.

Nothing is clearer in the scriptures than the fact that we must enter into a spiritual bond or union with Christ which is as close as the physical union which constitutes marriage. After speaking of sexual congress by which a man becomes one body with a woman, the apostle continues, "But he who is united with

the Lord becomes one spirit with him" (1 Corinthians 6:17). It is this absolute and unrestrained surrender to God and His Son which constitutes eternal life. One who embraces Christ in glad and complete involvement dies to self and Christ becomes his life. "For you have died, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life shall appear, then you will also appear with him in glory" (Colossians 3:2, 4). Christ is our life, but Christ is eternal, so the life we share in Christ is eternal life.

8. Eternal life is abiding in the Father and in the Son. It must be noticed that it is abiding in both. One cannot deny the Son and have the Father, nor can he deny the Father and have the Son. "No one who denies the Son has the Father. He who confesses the Son has the Father also. Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you will abide in the Son and in the Father. And this is what he has promised us, eternal life" (1 John 2:23-25). Our abiding in the Son and Father is contingent upon that which we heard from the beginning abiding in us. That which we heard from the beginning was the eternal life which was manifested, seen, heard and proclaimed unto us. It was eternal life as exhibited in the Son. So long as the Good News remains in us as a vital part of our spiritual existence, we have eternal life for that life is the result of the acceptance of the glad tidings.

9. Eternal life is vested in the Son of God. One who has a living relationship with Jesus has eternal life. "And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who has not the Son has not life. I write this to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life" (1 John 5:11, 12). "And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, to know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life" (1 John 5:20).

We believe that the things we have cited definitely support the view that eternal life is a relationship with God and Christ, and that we have eternal life now. John plainly declares that he wrote his epistle so we would know that we have eternal life. To explain the scriptures in such a manner as to deny this would be to array the word of God against itself.

In spite of these there are certain statements which make it appear that eternal life is yet future. One cannot be honest and objective and not face up to them. We shall list a few of them.

1. Eternal life is said to await dispensation in the day when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. Until that day some are said to be storing up wrath while others seek for something better. Of these last it is said, "For he will render to every man according to his works: to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life" (Romans 2:6, 7).

2. Eternal life is described as a harvest to be reaped from what is sown in this life. "For he who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption; but he who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life" (Galatians 6:8).

3. Eternal life is said to be something which we lay hold upon in the future. "Thus laying up for themselves a good foundation for the future; so that they may take hold of the life which is life indeed" (1 Timothy 6:19).

4. Eternal life is said to be our lot in the age to come and that age is contrasted with this time or now. "Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecution, and in the age to come eternal life" (Mark 10:29, 30).

5. Eternal life is declared to be the hope of the elect. "In hope of eternal life which God, who never lies, promised ages ago" (Titus 1:2). "So that we might be justified by his grace and become heirs in hope of eternal life" (Jude 21).

It would appear from these passages that eternal life is yet future and has no reference to our present state except in hopefulness and expectancy. But the scriptures are not contradictory. There are too many passages which plainly state that we now possess eternal life and we cannot simply toss them aside. We must seek for that harmony which comes to light with better understanding.

Fortunately we have a parallel in the teaching concerning the kingdom of God, or the kingdom of heaven. John the Baptist, Jesus, and the apostles all taught prior to the death of Christ, that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. Later, Paul wrote to the Colossians that God "has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son" (1:13). John declares that Jesus has "made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father" (Revelation 1:6).

In spite of this, we are informed by Paul that inheritance of the kingdom is contingent upon our resurrection from the dead and the spiritual and imperishable bodies to be received in conjunction therewith. "I tell you this, brethren: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable" (1 Corinthians 15:50). Peter tells us that our call and election must be confirmed with zeal, "so there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

The perceptive reader will immediately recognize that there is a sense in which we are now in the kingdom and sharing in its blessings, but there is another sense in which we have not inherited the kingdom, being inhibited by the flesh. The same things hold true with reference to eternal life. We know that we

have eternal life for at least one of the apostolic epistles was written to establish this very fact. Yet there is a fulness of this life which we can never experience so long as we are in the body, subject to limitation of time and space, and victims of suffering, pain and physical deterioration.

Death is separation. Life is union. Eternal life is union with the Eternal One. "If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater; for this is the testimony of God that he has borne witness to his Son. . . . And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life, he who has not the Son has not life" (1 John 5:9, 11, 12).

The Last Word

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Once upon a time, more years back than I like to contemplate now, I was a simple country lad, intrigued with all of the manifestations of nature. Ours was a family steeped in poverty and although I did not realize it, I was what the social workers of today call an underprivileged child. Unable to have those toys and playthings which cost money, we devised and constructed our own crude ones, and since I was of a more serious disposition I found pleasure and thrill in observation of the commonplace.

There were days when I lay on my back in the orchard watching a hawk or an eagle floating effortlessly in the sky upon a thermal current, and other days when I lay on my stomach on the creek bank watching a snake writhe his sinuous way across the flat rock projecting over the clear stream. Both were marvels to me before I knew that they had challenged the thinking of wise men for generations, and I shall never forget when I first read in Proverbs 30:18, 19, "Three things are too wonderful for me, four I do not understand: the way of an eagle in the sky, the way of a serpent on a rock, the way of a ship on the high seas, and the way of a man with a maiden."

There were occasions when God seemed very near. This was especially true on cold winter nights when the crisp snow crunched under one's step, and the thousands of twinkling stars seemed to shimmer so much closer to earth. It was also true when spring came with its resurrection of buds and blooms, and

its promise of rebirth. There was no question about the existence of God. It was blasphemy in our ears to hear one even profane the sacred name with oaths or cursing. Each time we sat down at the table we asked him to bless our meager fare. It never occurred to us that he might not hear.

Later, in that crucial period through which a boy passes as he wrestles with his own soul while he climbs the steeps toward manhood there were times of fleeting doubt. How do I know that God really exists? Do I believe as I do simply because I have been taught to do so by my parents, and how can I be sure they are right about God, seeing that my increasing knowledge proves that they have been wrong about so many other things?

Those were times of mental agony and intellectual suffering but I know now they had to come. They were essential to the development of a mature faith and personal conviction. After all, an infant learning to walk regards every wrinkle in the rug as a hill and every chair as a mountain. And the intellectual infant who stumblingly leaves the mental protection of his parents, like the physical one who fearfully leaves their arms, may exaggerate the obstacles in his path.

I am now at the place where I can assess realistically the values by which I would like to die as well as those by which I propose to live the days remaining on the earth. Strangely enough, I find myself thrown back upon the resources of the same kind of faith and trust which I knew as a child. The difference lies in the fact that then it was compulsory but now it is by choice. Then I was driven to it by sheer lack of knowledge, now I am dependent upon it because of the knowledge of how much I shall never know of myself.

I am not willing to conclude that all of the apologetic approach of the past must be discarded. To me some of it, at least, seems to be valid and worthy of consideration. And yet I realize that it may not speak as meaningfully to others as it does

to me. For that reason I have not written to persuade or convince others, but rather to testify of my personal convictions and to explain why I hold them. I will not provoke discussion with those who disagree.

I have not concerned myself with being either theologically or scientifically profound because I am not qualified to be either. It was my hope, as I began to write, that I could explain the faith of a plain man so that common folk would read with understanding. If I have failed in this my real purpose and mission have been thwarted.

It may well be that the very simplicity exhibited will appear to be radical in a sophisticated age, but it seems to me that a disciple of the Son of man will always appear so to the sons of men in the generation of his sojourn among them. The word "radical" means "root," which explains why it appears in our word "radish." A radical may be one who insists on getting to the root of things and it is regrettable that the term is now applied almost exclusively to one who seeks to "uproot" existing conditions.

I must plead guilty to being a radical in the best sense of the word. I firmly believe the universe is *rooted* in the creative power of an intellectual Being to whom we are responsible. It is this which gives meaning, purpose and direction to life. The thought of His watchful care and concern brings inner serenity and tranquility in life and provides hope of existence beyond the portals at the end of the road.

Mine is a living faith. God lives, Christ lives, and the revealed word is a living word. Because of this I also live. Life is a reality and in this reality I am a partaker of the infinite grace and of ultimate being. The sting of death has been extracted by the forceps of faith. The bondage of fear has been lifted by the resurrection. Even while tied to earth by the umbilical cord of the flesh through which I am sustained, I know that the time will

come when I shall be delivered into that fuller state of being for which we are destined. And the throes of death will really become the pangs of birth.

I find myself with a great deal of compassion for one who cannot believe. It is the same kind of feeling I always experience when I meet a blind person tapping along the sidewalk with his white cane, and never knowing what lies in his path ahead. I am sure there must always be an inner sense of fear and dread despite the studied attempt to appear normal and carefree.

We were made to believe and we could not long survive in an utterly faithless world. If we convince ourselves that we are merely combinations of minerals and chemicals and gases, produced by the earth and doomed to return to it, to be absorbed into nothingness, the earth will be nothing but a whirling prison, careening madly through space until all of its inhabitants are blindfolded and led into the death-chamber. Our very homes will cease to be islands of love and understanding and become cells of hopelessness on death row.

But if we believe that Jesus lived and died and rose again, the earth is placed in proper perspective. It is not a grim dragon breathing volcanic smoke and fumes, and opening up its waiting jaws to swallow us. Instead, it is the rest stop on a longer journey, sometimes dirty and uncomfortable as rest stops often are, but holding forth promise of the more glorious day ahead when the journey is completed.

And so I have come full circle, from childhood faith to childlike trust, and I am thrilled to have made the trip. I would not want to go back over the route again, bestrewn as it is with rusty mementoes of my failures, but I am happy that I have come the distance and can rest under the tree whose shade I welcomed and whose fruit I plucked when life was less hectic and responsibilities were fewer. And I know of no better words in conclusion than these which I have borrowed from a far

nobler pilgrim than myself:

"For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." To him be all praise!

THE PARABLE OF TELSTAR

by W. Carl Ketcherside

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PARABLE OF TELSTAR

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On Being Myself

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At various times in one's life he comes in contact, directly or otherwise, with those persons who make an impact upon his thinking, and thus place him in debt to them, as certainly as if they had loaned him money. Words are the currency in the realm of ideas as surely as coins are in the field of finance, and while one may not legitimately steal them, he should be able to borrow them with proper credit.

When I was in high school and just beginning to dream of things more precious than the mundane, I chanced upon a book which was published a couple of years before I was born. It was written in such simple and unadorned prose that it attracted me by its very humility. That book was *Adventures in Contentment,* **by David Grayson.**

It inspired in me two feelings— a love for good literature, wholesome and clean; and a desire to write with a homely touch. As to the first emotion, I want to quote a statement from the chapter entitled "An Evening at Home." The quotation to which I refer is preceded by these words: "Let the wind blow outside and the snow drift in piles around the doorway, and the blinds rattle— I have before me a long pleasant evening."

Grayson then writes: "What a convenient and delightful world is this world of books!— if you can bring to it not the obligation of a student, or look upon it as an opiate for idleness, but enter it rather with the enthusiasm of the adventurer! It has

vast advantages over the ordinary world of daylight, of barter and trade, of work and worry." I would covet the power to make men and women feel thus by my writings, but my limitations are too many and great.

I can be blamed for the content of this book, but not for its creation. Some who heard me speak at various times and places were kind enough to say that they wished my words were in print so they could read them meditatively, and pass them on to others who could not be present to hear them originally. Feeling far too highly complimented, I am sure, I finally decided to present some of my public addresses in this fashion.

All of the speeches found herein were delivered within one calendar year. They were chosen from a great mass of material, and may not represent the best selection at all. They were given at various places and under divergent circumstances, and you will thus find a treatment of a good many themes, not all of them closely related.

The first one, which gives its name to the book, was presented at a family camp where several hundred people of all ages met to share together in a daily round of praise to God and wholesome recreation. The second, "My Only Creed," has been included by request, having been previously printed in *Mission Messenger.* **It was prepared for delivery at the Annual Unity Conference, held in Atlanta, Georgia.**

Originally, this conference was started to bring men from all segments of our restoration movement together for high level discussion of our problems. For this reason it has generally been held on the campuses of colleges— Bethany, Milligan, Southeastern Christian, Lubbock Christian, Atlanta Christian, etc. I consider it is one of the most useful of the many forums now being conducted.

Camp Wi-Ne-Ma is located in a rugged beauty spot on the

Oregon coast. I was invited to be the Bible lecturer during the Week of Missions in 1971, and decided to offer a series of expository talks based only on the first chapter of 1 Thessalonians. These occur next in the book. They are followed by four other talks suggested at the same place by young men and women of high school and college age. The program for young people had been a little ragged and unorganized in previous years during the Week of Missions, and some of the kids whom I had met at colleges or universities decided to take advantage of my presence, so they could hear and question me. As always, this encounter was a thrilling one for me.

The remainder of the book is composed of messages presented at odd times. Some of them have been lifted out of a series, others were offered in "one night stands." I doubt that you will find any of them particularly outstanding, but they represent my approach to life and its problems. I have no ambition whatsoever to be thought of as a great preacher or editor, but I do want to be myself, and exemplify in word and deed my inner philosophy. The only way I know to be true to others is by first being true to myself.

You will not read far until you'll realize that I lack a great deal in polish and sophistication. Although it has been my good fortune to address some fairly erudite groups, I appreciate most of all the introduction of a rural mail carrier, who was acting as chairman of a meeting far down in the hills. He said, "Now just loosen your belts a notch or two, or let down your suspenders so they won't rub your shoulders, and lean back and be comfortable. Brother Ketcherside is one of us!"

I am never bothered when some faded and wrinkled saint comes up to me and says, "My brother, you may come from the city of Saint Louis, but I call that country preachin'." There's a homespun quality about country things that takes me back to my boyhood days with their breakfasts of fried ham and red-eye gravy, topped off with buttered biscuits and sorghum molasses. I

hope I never outgrow my love for simple fare, whether dished up at the kitchen table, or verbally at the speaker's stand.

I guess I will never forget, however, that once when I finished a question forum on a state college campus, the long-haired young fellow who presided arose and said, "Until Mr. Ketcherside came along today, I never realized how much of the bread of life was composed of corn." I got a bang out of that because a lot of people talk about corn who never saw a shucking peg, or never bounced an ear of Reed's Yellow Dent off the bang-board of the wagon on a frosty morning. You see, where I came from, the more corn you had in your crib, the better off you were, and the man who was out of corn would be in serious trouble before the winter was over.

I trust that you will derive a little of the same thrill from reading what I said, as I did from preparing and saying it. I thank those who were patient enough to listen to me, and those of you who are kind enough to read this book. It is my fervent hope that we may meet here, but if we do not, then I shall look for you at the glad reunion of all the saints over there. With prayers for you and all who are dear unto you, I am thrilled to be both

Yours and HIS,

W. CARL KETCHERSIDE
139 Signal Hill Drive
Saint Louis, Missouri 63121

The Parable of Telstar

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Most of us recognize that one of the greatest problems we face in our modern world lies in the realm of communication. It is difficult to break through the "sound barrier" and convey our thoughts to another. This is responsible for much of the misunderstanding and strife in our day. Broken homes result from it, community disorder is attributable to it, and no other single factor contributes as much to international tension and fear. If we just understood one another, a great deal of suspicion would fade away and peace would take its place.

In the spiritual realm no less than in the domestic, social and political, we must contend with the same problem. God did not choose to impose the divine will upon us arbitrarily, but to "teach us of his ways." To do this it was necessary for him to use the means of communication which rational beings employ to exchange thoughts among themselves. Since the highest form of such communication is by language, in which words are employed, the revelation of heaven has been given in "words which the Holy Spirit teacheth."

It is axiomatic that the unknown can only be understood in the light of the known. All acquisition of knowledge is progressive and each fact ascertained becomes a foundation for the grasp of additional knowledge. The mind is enlightened as the sun lights the earth. The sun does not attain its meridian in one great burst of light, so our progress from mental darkness and ignorance is also gradual as "the eyes of understanding"

become adjusted to behold more clearly that which previously was in shadows but is revealed with increasing detail.

Jesus was a master teacher. When he became clothed in flesh he shared the lot of those who were his disciples. His sympathy and compassion were unbounded. He did not attempt to convey the will of heaven in its fulness until men were able to grasp it. He said, "I have many things to say unto you but you are not yet able to bear them." His mode of conveying information was adapted to the day in which he taught and to the needs of those who heard him. When he invited them to "Come, learn of me," he assured them that his yoke was easy and his burden was light.

The Hebrew has one word for teaching, *charaz,* **which literally means "to string beads together." This seems to have been the method favored by Jesus. Drawing upon the daily life of his hearers for illustrative material, he pointed them to sublime truths by use of those things with which they were all familiar. A good example of one string of pearls is found in Matthew, chapter thirteen, which consists of a series of seven parables, one after another, all separate and yet all joined by a central string of thought. In each instance a simple event is made to bear testimony to a majestic spiritual principle. The Sunday school lad who defined a parable as "An earthly story with a heavenly meaning" stated a real truth.**

Some of the parables of Jesus were drawn from established customs related to marriage and other events. Such was the story of the ten virgins who took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom, five of whom made no provision for any delay in the proceedings. Too, there was the account of the king who prepared a wedding feast for his son and issued invitations to a group who were so busy with routine affairs that all of them found an excuse to stay away.

Other parables were related to the occupations of ancient

Palestine, such as husbandry, farming, fishing and gem collecting. Still others had to do with daily household tasks such as baking of bread for the family or grinding at the mill. Again there were stories conditioned upon the state of affairs in an occupied country where the presence of alien troops caused the populace to hide their treasure out in the fields. One who had but little knowledge of the life of the people could learn a great deal about it from reading and digesting the parables.

Have you ever thought of the kind of talk which Jesus might deliver today if invited to be the guest speaker at a weekly luncheon meeting of the Rotary Club? In all probability he would sprinkle his address with parables for the record says of his messages to those of his day, "Without a parable spake he not unto them." But what kind of parables would he now use to illustrate the kingdom of heaven? Certainly, if a parable is effective only when drawn from contemporary life, he would not talk about shepherds, flocks and folds. In this day of sliced and wrapped bread purchased from the nearest grocery, he would not discourse about a woman putting leaven in two measures of meal. Neither would he talk about virgins with oil lamps sallying forth to escort a bridegroom.

We live in what is called the "Space Age." Children who never saw a flock of sheep or a vineyard are thoroughly conversant with rockets and satellites. If Jesus were asked to speak at the local elementary school, and if the Supreme Court did not issue an injunction against his doing so, he would tie his message in with the life of our century of progress. It will not require too much imagination nor will it be cheapening the revelation of God to surmise that Jesus would, in all likelihood, draw upon some of the accomplishments in space exploration to drive home his points. The principles enunciated and the lessons set forth would be adapted to the status of a twentieth century audience. If Jesus were with us in the flesh he would no more dress his messages in the verbal garb of ancient Palestine than he would personally clothe himself in the dress of that time and

place.

Perhaps there is a lesson here for us. We need to grasp the sublime truths about the kingdom revealed by the parables of long ago and clothe them with the daily life and current experiences of our own generation. Only thus can we communicate heaven's truth to those about us. The Christian concept is not that of Jesus pointing us to a book, but of the Book pointing us to Jesus, and if we worship the book instead of our Lord we will be guilty of Bibliolatry. We should not become enslaved by antiquated expressions until the thought is lost. This does not imply that we should be flippant or irreverent but we need to remember that one can be reverent in any language, and if he does not express himself reverently in English he might not do so in Greek. Reverence exists in the heart before it climbs to expression on the lips.

I have been thinking recently that Jesus might well employ the Telstar satellite in a modern parable. Certainly our world is familiar with the great scientific achievement involved in this outstanding communication medium. We do not know *how* it functions but we know that it does because we can sit in our own living rooms and see the result on the television screen. Here is a modern technological creation which seems to bring men closer to each other and gives us all a more universal perspective. Through its functioning we share in a closer kinship with those who are remote from us on our earthly globe. "The kingdom of heaven is like Telstar." In what ways is this true?

1. Telstar did not create itself. It is a mechanism so complex as to defy understanding upon the part of the scientific layman. No one would be so absurd as to harbor the thought that such a remarkable composition of synchronized parts, many of which are minute but essential, was the result of mere chance or represented but "a fortuitous concourse of atoms." Telstar is the result of creative purpose and intelligent design. It had to exist in thought before it became a reality. But even

Telstar pales into insignificance when compared with the human body with its intricate networks of nerves, veins and arteries. Moreover, the human being is alive and possessed of creative ability, as witness Telstar itself. How ridiculous it is to postulate that Telstar could not create itself but to doubt that man existed on "the divine drawing board" of infinite intellect before he was brought into existence.

2. Telstar was not only created according to the purpose of its creators but in order to fulfill a specific purpose in itself. Regardless of what else it might accomplish, if it failed in that area for which it was designed it could never be considered a success. It was not the intention of the scientists who brought it into being to have it merely circle the earth in repetitious rounds but it was made for the good of humanity since its creators were human. By the same token man was made to fulfil a purpose. Anything else which might be accomplished would be considered as secondary to this purpose. No man has ever discharged his responsibility for being until he realizes and recognizes the purpose of his creation and measures up to it. Our true purpose on earth is to glorify the creator, and since he is divine we do this by putting on and exhibiting the divine nature.

Telstar on the launching pad was useless except as an exhibit for scientific study and research. It was only when the satellite was put into orbit and functioning to enhance communications that it could fulfill its mission. Too many of us are still on the launching pad. Under such circumstances the human being may be the subject of study physically, mentally and emotionally, and he may serve to gratify the desires of scientists to probe into personality and other factors, but man was not created to be merely a museum piece. It is only as we get into orbit and achieve the destiny for which we were created that we derive real happiness from life.

3. Telstar did not launch itself into orbit. There had to be a power from without and this power had to apply sufficient force

to remove the satellite from its earthbound state into the atmosphere. The thrust of rocketry had to be great enough to transfer the satellite from its imprisoned state to one of freedom from the pull of earth and transform it into an individual unit in its own right. The same thing holds true in our personal lives. We cannot pull ourselves up by our own boot straps.

The apostle to the Gentiles declared, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile." The word "power" is from the Greek *dunamis,* **from which we derive such words as dynamo, dynamite and dynamic. Certainly the power to move an object is contained in these words. The gospel is God's dynamic to put one in orbit in the state of salvation. The gospel is the "good news" that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, that he was buried, and that he was raised again the third day according to the scriptures. The apostle declares that we are saved by these facts if we keep them in memory. The power in the gospel is derived from the fact that the death of Christ removes from us the guilt and penalty of sin, while the resurrection provides for us a hope which transcends the fear of death. Although the liberating power is available in the gospel rocket capsule it does not become activated for our personal use until lighted by the spark of faith. When faith kindles the propulsive power in our hearts we are set free to fulfil our divine purpose and mission.**

Occasionally there are those who question the ability of the gospel to lift us from the mundane and place us in orbit where we can function as the creator intended. Generally those who do this regard the gospel as mere words. They overlook the fact that the Good News is a vehicle of the Holy Spirit and it is the Spirit which operates on the heart through the medium of the word of God. The apostle addressed "those of God's scattered people" who lived in Asia Minor as "chosen of old in the purpose of God the Father, hallowed to his service by the Spirit, and consecrated with the sprinkled blood of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:1, 2). Any

theory of our salvation which slights the eternal purpose, the Spirit, or the blood of Jesus, is inadequate as an explanation of what transpires in our personal encounter and relationship with God.

The same writer in the salutation of his second epistle says, "His divine power has bestowed on us everything that makes for life and true religion, enabling us to know the One who called us by his own splendor and might. Through this might and splendor he has given us his promises, great beyond all price, and through them you may escape the corruption with which lust has infected the world, and come to share in the very being of God" (2 Peter 1:3, 4). The purpose of true religion is to enable us to know God who called us. If it does not achieve this it is empty and vain. Nothing is more vacuous than the mere performance of ritual for ritual's sake. It is true that our worship must be prescribed by God; it is just as true that it must lead to God. If it does not we are like little children "playing church."

What is said about the promises which are "great beyond all price" is very vital to our life which must be in orbit to be effective. These promises are God's "escape hatch" from a sinking world. They provide for us a ladder lowered into the pit which is filled with sin and degradation infected by lust. God not only calls us but provides the way of escape from our predicament and the power to use the way. The goal of escape is to be lifted or elevated to the place where we can share in the very being of God. The contrast between a life groveling in the mire of corruption and one which shares in the very being of God is so great as to stagger human imagination. Indeed it is so far above our feeble powers of comprehension that its attainment cannot be predicated upon knowledge but upon faith.

4. It was not enough for Telstar to be launched but it has to have sufficient power to maintain it in orbit and to keep it going

on its unwearying course. A great many lives are given the impetus to start them on their way but they "bum themselves out" before they have continued very long. We must recognize that when we waver and doubt we get back in that atmosphere where the gravitational pull to accept our former way of life becomes almost irresistible. We lose spiritual altitude and with it we lose the power of overcoming the insistent tug at our hearts. Of such characters the word of God says, "They had once escaped the world's defilements through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ; yet if they have entangled themselves in these all over again, and are mastered by them, their plight in the end is worse than before. How much better never to have known the right way, than, having known it, to turn back and abandon the sacred commandments delivered to them" (2 Peter 2:20, 21).

Again, we must remember that we are all subject to external pressure and just as increased momentum through the atmosphere brings increased resistance, so our lives become subjected to mounting tensions as we more zealously serve God and move against the slipstream of popular worldliness. We must be pressurized within to withstand the pressures from without. If a chink appears in our armor it may be sufficient to allow entrance of destructive forces which will blow us to bits. The explosive action of sin in a human life is well known by those who have experienced it personally or observed its results in the wreckage of other lives around them.

It is well for us to enquire what is the source of the power of resistance within which enables us to face the routines of life without coming apart at the seams or flying to bits. God is just as concerned to keep us going as to get us going, and it is to Him we must look for the creative energy required to stay aloft and to perform our spiritual functions. Fortunately, the divine revelation does not leave us ignorant concerning these matters. We are empowered within by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us so that we are actually "space capsules" filled with divine energy. It

was for this reason the apostle prayed for the saints in Ephesus that the Father "may grant you strength and power through his Spirit in your inner being" (Eph. 3:16).

All of us know that it is much easier to start a project than to carry it through to completion. The spiritual life is an adventure, and like every other such experience we enter upon it with verve and vigor. For awhile we are carried along on a transport of joy because of the freshness and newness of our encounter with the divine. But when life becomes routine and we must grapple in hand-to-hand conflict with the forces of temptation and evil, when resistance is worn down and zeal flags, we conclude that it would be easier to succumb and surrender than to keep on. It is for just such a reason the Spirit dwells in the sons of God.

Few of us have ever really appreciated the reality of the sentiment expressed in 2 Corinthians 4:7-9, "We are no better than pots of earthenware to contain this treasure, and this proves that such transcendent power does not come from us, but it is God's alone. Hard-pressed on every side we are never hemmed in; bewildered, we are never at our wit's end; hunted, we are never abandoned to our fate; struck down, we are not left to die."

The indication is that we must expect pressures from every side. We will suffer from bewilderment as to the course we should pursue, we will be hunted and even struck down by the forces of fate. Under such conditions the normal thing for a pot of earthenware would be to crack up or fragment. But there is within us a power which presses outward which is greater than the force from without which presses in. The strength of resistance does not lie in the vessel of earth but resides solely in the power which abides inside of the container. "Such transcendent power does not come from us, but is God's alone."

Notice what results accrue from this indwelling power

which assure our preservation. It is affirmed that while "hard—pressed from every side we are never hemmed in." It would seem that with pressures coming from every side we would undoubtedly be hemmed in. Under such conditions everywhere we look we see a stone wall and the walls appear to be closing in upon us. The answer is found in the use of the expression "transcendent power." "Transcendent" means to "go or be above or beyond." It is from the Latin word which means "to climb over or beyond." That is why we can never be hemmed in by pressures from every side. We do not gain freedom by fighting them, but by climbing over them, by being lifted above them. The way of escape is not forward but upward.

Again it is affirmed that we will be "bewildered, but never at our wits' end." Life is very complex and often appears as a maze through which we must pick our path and choose our course. The race is run over an obstacle course. A great many think that the road of life is a straight one drawn like a line from here to the gates of glory. This is because they mistake the word "straight" for 'strait" in a statement of Jesus. Even then our Lord applied it to the gate and not to the road, when he said, "Strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life." A modern translation is correct in rendering it. "The gate that leads to life is small and the road is narrow, and those who find it are few." A narrow road is sometimes very crooked and filled with curves and turns.

Only the one in whom the Spirit of God abides can be certain that he will not come to a dead-end street where the gate will slam shut behind him and make retreat or escape impossible. All of us, saint and sinner alike, are baffled and beset by problems. Those who are not have withdrawn from reality and live in a dream world of their own fancy. The difference between "the children of light" and "the children of this world" is that the latter live solely by their wits and when they reach the end of their knowledge or perception, only death awaits. He who has the mind of God need never be at his wits' end although his

problems may be many and difficult.

We will be hunted. The probing fingers of temptation will seek us out as the searchlights of the enemy scan the skies to detect a plane and direct the full force of the anti-aircraft fire against it. The baying hounds of sin and slavery will track us continually to pull us down and return us to bondage. When the apostle wrote to Corinth, God's people were often literally hunted by the forces of paganism. They were driven from place to place and their lives were constantly in danger. In spite of all this they never felt alone because of his abiding presence. It is true that our lives are no longer endangered because of our faith, but our souls are in perpetual danger because of the pursuing forces of evil. It is as true now, as in the days of primitive Christianity, that we are not alone in Our struggles to remain free. He has promised, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

The forces around us sometimes strike us down but never without God's knowledge. You do not know the sparrow population of the town you live in and what a task it would be to take the sparrow census of the United States. Yet our heavenly Father knows every sparrow and not one of them shall fall to the ground without his notice. A sparrow is a very insignificant creature. We do not even look twice if we see a dead one lying in the road. Jesus points out that we are of more value than many sparrows and urges upon us the conclusion that God will certainly care for us if he notes the fall of a sparrow. We are not left to die when struck down.

Now the gist of all this is that we are not placed in orbit without sustaining power. The daily friction of life need not wear us out. It is not necessary for us to give in, give up or give out. Just as modern satellites replenish their power from the rays of the sun, so our spiritual vitality can be maintained by the way of the Son.

5. In the last place we need to be like Telstar in bringing the world of mankind closer together. After all, this is a communications satellite. Its prime purpose is to receive a message and transmit it to others who might never receive it otherwise. It portrays what has happened or what is happening, so that it is a bearer of tidings, a news carrier to the world of mankind.

Now I submit to you that every child of God has this same obligation. We have taken our places among the galaxy of the saints of all ages and occupy our position in the spiritual firmament for this very reason. The good news which has been projected to us must be reflected from us. When Jesus was ready to leave the earth he met his disciples on a certain mountain. He told them that full authority had been committed unto him in heaven and on earth. He then commanded them, "Go forth to every part of the world, and proclaim the Good News to the whole creation. Those who believe it and receive baptism will find salvation; those who do not believe will be condemned." These humble men were to be the envoys of the King. They were the communications satellites of their day reflecting the greatest message the world has ever heard.

The task which was theirs in that age is ours in this generation. One of the apostles wrote to a young preacher, "The things which thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also." The religious world has been torn to shreds over what has been designated the doctrine of "apostolic succession" but in one respect we are all successors to the apostles. The responsibility for taking the Good News to the world has fallen upon our shoulders. And we are under the same obligation as Timothy, who was told, "Keep safe that which has been entrusted to you. Turn a deaf ear to empty and worldly chatter, and the contradictions of so-called 'knowledge,' for many who lay claim to it have shot far wide of the faith."

It is obvious that Telstar has accomplished a great deal by promoting better understanding among peoples of all nations. It is universal in its impact. It makes it possible for all to share in the blessings and privileges which have been bestowed upon us by a kind and gracious providence. There comes a new conviction that truly we are all of one blood and offspring of the same creator. Our mutual kinship becomes ever more apparent. The telecast of a message which is of world-wide concern naturally welds us into a more closely-knit union.

The Good News which has been entrusted unto us is designed to batter down walls which men have erected. It is affirmed of Jesus that, in uniting Gentiles and Jews, he "has broken down the enmity which stood like a dividing wall between them." Jesus came to make the wall against sin a stronger bulwark, but to remove every artificial barrier which men had erected to keep God's family apart. His method of accomplishing this was plainly stated. "So he came and proclaimed the good news: peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were nearby; for through him we both alike have access to the Father in one Spirit."

It is our conviction that the message which eradicated the hostility between Gentile and Jew, bitter as the hatred was, has proven that it contains the power to remove all barriers between men. But the message has to be proclaimed. It must be circulated. The sound must again go into all the world and the words unto the ends of the earth. It must reach those who are far off as well as those who are near by. The whole realm of humanity must be made to realize that we are children of the same Father and that God so loved *the world* as to give his Son for all. This is the message beamed to us which we must relay to all. This is our true mission, our real vocation.

"For the kingdom of heaven is likened unto Telstar which men launched into orbit that good news might be shared with an alien world so that all men might come to recognize that kinship

which will lead at last to true brotherhood.”

My Only Creed

Contents

Perhaps nothing is more repugnant to civilized man than the thought of cannibalism. The dictionary defines a cannibal as "a human who eats human flesh," and cannibalism as "the eating of one's own kind."

In the month of May, 1845, when Great Britain was all agog with interest for exploring the Arctic Region and discovering the Northwest Passage, Sir John Franklin sailed away in command of two vessels, the *Erebus* and the *Terror*. They disappeared, and sparked a search which lasted into the twentieth century.

In 1848, Dr. John Rae, of the Hudson's Bay Company, relayed information which he had gained from Eskimos, that a band of white men had died from starvation on King Edward's Island. They had sold him what appeared to be relics of the Franklin expedition. Dr. Rae conscientiously reported that the Eskimos had informed him that members of the party had been reduced to cannibalism.

This aroused a furor in London. Distinguished writers such as Charles Dickens and Willkie Collins blasted the report as a slur upon the honor of the Royal Navy. Lady Franklin opposed payment of the ten thousand pounds which had been offered by the government for information as to the fate of the explorers. She launched a privately financed expedition to probe the Arctic wastes to prove that the slander was not true.

Scores of brilliant men and women backed her endeavor. It was unthinkable to them that men, reared in the graces of civility and polished by the sheen of society could ever stoop to the consumption of human flesh. It was as late as 1922 that Knud Rasmussen "conclusively proved the truth of Rae's revelation of cannibalism, by discovering at Starvation Cove the skeletons of Europeans with the bones cut by saws and the skulls broken to extract the brains."

Now if physical cannibalism is repulsive, consider what a terrifying thing it is for brethren to engage in such a practice spiritually. It is this which prompts Paul to condemn the use of liberty as an occasion for the flesh, and to add, "But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another." *The New Testament in Plain English* **translates the passage, "But if you bite and eat up one another, take care that you are not destroyed by one another." It is unthinkable that those whose banner is inscribed with the words, "Brotherly Love," should engage in destroying one another. Yet the sin of cannibalism lies at the door of many who profess to be children of God.**

What is even worse is that we are treated to the sight of a body of believers insanely attacking its own members and tearing with bloody talons at its own tissue. One cannot help but recall the Greek fable of Erisichthon, the profane person and hater of the gods. As the poets related the story, Erisichthon defied the gods by attacking with his axe a venerable oak in a grove sacred to Ceres. When a bystander remonstrated, Erisichthon hacked him to pieces and cut off his head.

When news of this impiety reached Ceres, she decided upon a punishment so dire as to make all shudder who heard it. She dispatched an Oread into the farthest reaches of ice-clad Scythia to summon the dread Famine to take possession of the bowels of Erisichthon. Finding him asleep, she enfolded him with her wings and breathed herself into him, infusing her

poison into his veins. He awoke with a raging hunger, and loudly cried for food which he consumed as soon as it was brought. All that he owned he sold to purchase food, but his dreadful appetite was not abated.

At length, with nothing left to barter, he sold his daughter, but this did not provide enough food, and finally hunger forced him to devour his own limbs, and he strove to sustain his body by devouring it, until death relieved him from the sentence pronounced by the vengeful Ceres. This myth is older than our gospel records, but it serves to depict the state of the body of believers which I have known since childhood. That body has sought to protect, perpetuate and propagate itself through self-destruction. It has severed its own members, gouged out its own eyes, cut out its own tongue and fragmented itself in many communities. And it has done this under the guise of upholding the truth.

What has happened is very clear to the astute student. We were "a search and rescue mission" intended to locate the Christians in all of the sects and to guide them back to the base of unity and peace. But we became entangled in the jungle, and motivated by fear of our own shadows and unable to distinguish between friend and foe. Now we need to be rescued from our plight. We are more schismatic, more divided, and less at peace than those whom we set out to unite.

What is the remedy for our state? Unless we have abandoned the ideal of restoration it is very simple. When our nineteenth century predecessors saw the frightful divisions existing in the Protestant establishment, they knew that "the correction and improvement of no creed, or partisan establishment in Christendom could ever become the basis of such a union, communion and cooperation, as would restore peace to a church militant against itself, or triumph to the common salvation." Accordingly, they recommended that men cease to emphasize their creeds, ignore their partisan

establishments and return to the original order.

If this advice was the answer for the sectarianism of others, why is it not the solution for our own? I contend that it is not only the answer but it is the only answer. We must go back, back, back— beyond every unwritten creed, every test of union and communion which we have devised— back to a creed of such transcendent importance that the very issue of eternal life is suspended upon its acceptance, a creed of such universal dynamic as to arouse again the gleam of hope in the jaded eyes of despairing men floundering in the garbage-polluted waters of a sectarian sea.

So long as we continue to toy with the forlorn daydream that we can elevate our puny parties to the status of the kingdom of heaven, or smuggle into the throne room an illegitimate child of our own begetting, which we have cleverly christened "the Lord's church," we are merely constructing a fool's paradise and building castles in the air. If we are unwilling to divest ourselves of our own sectarian creeds and formulae, we should never again raise a voice of criticism against our religious neighbors who tenaciously cling to their human dogmas.

Those who are willing to begin at a certain point in our divided state and freeze all division which occurred before, and go on from there, are simply deceiving themselves. They are not opposed to division in the body of our Lord. They only deplore separation from themselves. No one who accepts a certain amount of schism as normal can ever truly labor for the union of all believers in Christ Jesus.

Those who want to start in at the point of division falsely attributed to instrumental music, and strive to unite all of the warring factions in the non-instrument ranks, are not seeking for the unity of the body of Christ, but for the pacific continuance of a non-instrument party or sect. And if every warring tribe which went forth to battle under a standard

bearing the caption, "Vocal Music," agreed to bury the hatchet and smoke the calumet, this would not mean that the *ekklesia* of God was united. Indeed, if peace were restored to all of the heirs of the restoration movement it would not mean that the one body was now united, for the body of Christ is greater than any movement within it, and greater even than the restoration movement.

What is the foundation upon which we can unite our scattered forces, and then offer it to the religious world as the basis upon which we can build to answer the prayer of our precious Lord? What was proposed at the very outset of the Way, antedating all forms and ceremonies, and preceding all speculative and partisan debates? What can we present to the ecumenical world in our day which will contribute anything valuable to the search for oneness in the Lord of glory?

Many men who have grown weary with the attempt to unravel the tangled skeins of our own sectarian involvements have given up. They have argued and debated, fought and struggled, only to find conditions growing steadily worse. They despair of ever bringing order out of the complicated snarl, and have resigned themselves to continuing to stolidly slog along in the partisan path. They are bone-tired of the effort to argue out every angle of every wrangle, and adjust every action of every faction. What they forget is that this is not now, and never was the way to attain oneness.

In an ancient city of Phrygia, an oracle decreed to the populace that their next king would arrive in a wagon. At this very time, a poor country man, Gordius, with his wife and son, was driving his wagon toward the marketplace. He was wildly acclaimed and made king. Gordius sacrificed his oxen, dedicated his wagon to the deity of the oracle, and tied it in place with a large fast knot. A tradition developed that whoever untied the knot would be lord of all Asia. Many tried agonizingly to undo it, working their fingers to the bone. When Alexander the Great

came to Phrygia he also tried, but becoming impatient, he drew his sword and cut the knot with one swift stroke.

We must take the sword of the Spirit and cut through the intricate involvements of our own sectarianism. This I have done in my own heart and for my own life. I have no time left for nit-picking and playing tiddly-winks inside of our partisan pillboxes. There is nothing noble about storming molehills which warped vision and defective eyesight have elevated to mountainous status.

Our Lord did not agonize on Calvary to purchase with his precious blood a mere party to defend to the death a position on cups or classes. The prophets of old did not endure stoning and torture, looking forward to a Golden Age when men, quoting their words for authority, would spill fratricidal blood upon forensic battle-fronts, striving over an opinion as to the meaning of the millennium, or the place of music in the presentation of praise to the Prince of peace.

There is only one creed endorsed by heaven as the basis of union and communion for the saints of God. There has never been another, and there never will be another! It is not related to human opinion, doctrinal deduction, or mental apprehension of an apostolic epistle. That creed is not a precept, but a person. Reduced to a proposition as a statement of faith, it is simply that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God."

When one believes this proposition with all of his heart, he believes all that God has ever required of any man, insofar as personal faith is related to salvation from sin. This is the divinely enunciated creed, and when one presents himself to me, professing his confidence in this as a fact, I am obligated to immerse him into that glorious new relationship signified by the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

I dare not create myself a one-man papal inquisitor, and

probe his thinking as related to any theological speculation or philosophical opinion. Whether he deduces that Jesus will return before the millennium, or following it, or whether he has ever heard of the millennium, is none of my concern. He may know nothing about the thousand-year reign.

Whatever opinion he may hold with regard to the means for propagandizing the world with the gospel is none of my business. There is a world of difference between receiving and accepting the Good News as saving truth, and speculating as to the best method for disseminating it to a world lying in wickedness.

God has not authorized me to set up an immigration bureau and a customs office at the border of the kingdom of heaven, and demand that all of the weary pilgrims open up their mental baggage and expose their thoughts and concepts for my haughty and arrogant inspection. No one will be debarred from divine acceptance simply because of my obstinate refusal to stamp the approval of a self-important faction upon some article of rationalization. Everyone who has the passport of faith will be admitted exactly as I was allowed to enter, bringing along a motley assortment of mental notions and fancies, with which all of us must toy as we strive toward maturity. God does not demand that we divest ourselves of all our souvenirs and playthings in order to be his children, even though others of his children may see no significance in them.

Many of our brethren have rejected the compassion of Jesus for the conformity of Procrustes. This legendary tyrant, whose name means "The Stretcher," set up his iron bedstead near Eleusis, in Attica. Every person who passed by was forced to become a victim for his torture. They were made to lie down upon the bed and, if they were too short for it, they were hammered or stretched to fit. If they were too long they were cut down to proper length. But Procrustes was captured and slain by Theseus, who inflicted upon him the same torture that

Procrustes has imposed upon his victims, cutting him down to fit the bed. The most frightening utterance of Jesus for many of our brethren, should be, "For as you judge others, so you will yourselves be judged, and whatever measure you deal out to others will be dealt back to you."

I want to make my own position clear. I want to do so now! I want my generation to know exactly where I stand. My creed is Jesus Christ! My basis of union is Jesus Christ! My test of fellowship is Jesus Christ! My criterion for communion is Jesus Christ! I have no other creed, and I want no other. I reject here and now, once and for all, any plea for unity based upon conformity to any metaphysical or philosophic deductions, or predicated upon the universal acceptance of any speculation or opinion elevated to doctrinal dogma. I care not one whit more for the unwritten creeds which have produced our particular parties than I do for the more formal ones which have spawned the sects.

I would as soon try to enter heaven with the Nicene Creed clutched in my hand as a possible passport to glory, as to try to pry open the gates of pearl with one of the unwritten "Church of Christ" creeds as a tool. But every man should have a justifiable reason for adoption of the creed upon which he bases his hope of relationship with the Father and the Son, and I am no exception.

My reason is very simple. I respect the Bible as God's word. I receive it without quirk or quibble. It is my only rule of faith and practice. I simply accept it as of divine origin, and seek to implement its disclosures in my own life and conduct. And I hold that the very core of revealed saving truth is that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, and that this fact, substantiated by the best testimony available unto man, is the foundation upon which the community of the reconciled ones is built, and that there is no other foundation which man can lay!

1. This was the countersign of the rule of heaven among

men, announced personally by the Father of mercies. It was the only pronouncement which came as a specific communication from God to mankind in direct conjunction with the mission of Jesus, and the voice came from heaven when Jesus was baptized in the waters of the Jordan. If God did not at this time reveal the foundation of our restored relationship unto Him, then He never did so, and the law of Moses which was inaugurated by his voice from heaven was more auspicious in its origin than the regime of His Son.

2. This was the abiding principle upon which Jesus declared he would constitute the community of "the called-out," and it stands in contrast to whatever other associations and identifications may be attached unto him by men. He is not to be confused with harbinger or prophet, for though their missions may be divine, they are not. The kingdom of heaven is erected upon the divinity of Jesus. This is the most sublime truth of all ages. When one stands upon it he is grounded in that against which the very gates of Hades are helpless and impotent.

3. This is the one foundation which has been laid for the unity of the saints. When Paul wrote to the fragmented and splintered believers in Corinth, his first great question was "Is Christ divided?" The second was a corollary to it. "Was Paul crucified for you?" Jesus is undivided and indivisible. No other man, not even a father in the gospel, can supplant Jesus as the basis of hope. When the apostle wrote, "There can be no other foundation beyond that which is already laid; I mean Jesus Christ himself," he was still talking about the cure for disunity among the brethren.

The foundation of the temple of God is a person, the Son of God. He is not only the Alpha, but he is the Omega. There is no one before him. There is no one after him. There is no other foundation beyond. "What think you of Christ? whose Son is he?" This is the universal question for mankind. It is the criterion of spiritual involvement with the Eternal One. If one is

right about Jesus, he can be wrong about many other things and still be saved. If he is wrong about Jesus, he can be right about everything else and still be lost.

4. This was the burden of the Good News proclaimed by the chosen envoys of the King, when they were sent forth into an alien world. One of them wrote, "As for me, brothers, when I came to you, I declared the attested truth of God without display of fine words or wisdom. I resolved that while I was with you I would think of nothing but Jesus Christ— Christ nailed to the cross." *Nothing but Jesus Christ***! He wrote again, "Christ did not send me to baptize, but to proclaim the Gospel; and to do it without relying on the language of worldly wisdom, so that the fact of Christ on his cross might have its full weight."**

What does this mean? It means that God has proposed to unite all who believe in Jesus, upon the basis of one great universal fact, a fact demonstrated and proven in the context of human history, a fact substantiated by credible human witnesses and by the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven. It means that the one foundation of union and communion for the saints is Jesus, the Son of God, the personal embodiment of truth, and not some truths, or certain truths, not even those uttered by Jesus.

The kingdom of light is a kingdom of faith, and faith has to do with facts, not with abstract truths. All facts are true, but not all truths are facts. One who accepts him who is *the truth***, thereby commits himself to the acceptance of all truths as they become known to him, but such truths can never become the basis of union, else our faith must stand in the developing wisdom of men and not in the eternal power of God.**

The basis of our unity in Christ Jesus is not a compilation of propositions deduced from the scriptures by speculative theologians. It is not a formal code of morals or ethics drawn up in a conclave or convention. It is not even the sacred scriptures of the new covenant themselves. The saints were united before

one apostolic epistle was ever written, and even now one may be relatively ignorant of the content of these letters and still be in Christ Jesus.

No personal experience of one in Christ, whether such experience is real or fancied, can ever become the criterion of fellowship in the Lord of glory. No one can impose such a personal experience upon another as a test of faith or worthiness, and no one can be deposed for testifying to such a personal experience. Those who seek to bind in all such cases show that they have another creed than Christ, and all who build their hopes alone upon personal experiences and phenomena are doomed to eventual disillusionment. It is only when an experience draws us closer to the heart of Jesus that it possesses any validity. It is Jesus who makes our relationship to any concept, happening, or experience valid, and not an experience which makes the relationship to Jesus a valid one.

Our relationship to Jesus stems from faith and not from knowledge or personal experience. Faith has to do with testimony, and testimony has to do with fact. The beloved apostle wrote that Jesus did a multitude of signs in the presence of his disciples. They saw them and knew that they were real. Out of this treasure of signs, the Spirit selected a number, and the very type, which would produce faith in any honest heart. These have been recorded, and they were written down that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, and by believing this, we might have life in him. This is the life-giving fact. It is the only one. Other truths may strengthen us and stimulate us, but they cannot produce life. It is unfortunate that many of our brethren cannot distinguish between life and a stimulant.

Our problem in this age is that we have lost Christ in the Bible, we have lost the Bible in the church, and we have lost the church in the world. We must now rescue Jesus from the Bible or become like the scribes and Pharisees to whom Jesus said,

"You search the scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life, but their purpose is to testify of me. And you will not come unto me that you might have life."

Life does not come from searching the scriptures. The scriptures do not produce eternal life. The scriptures are a gift from God just as life is a gift from God. We have confused the love letters with the Lover; the Captain of our salvation with his orders; the fodder with the Shepherd; and the prescription with the Physician. We have eclipsed the Son of God with the wisdom of the sons of men. And by worshiping the scriptures instead of the Savior we often end up with a head full of quotations and a heart empty of Jesus. Christianity is not Jesus pointing us to a book, but a book pointing us to Jesus. The prodigal could have been preoccupied with a road map and remained in the pig pen!

We must recover the Bible from the church. The people of God have carried the word of God captive. Once more the book of God has been lost in the temple of God. It has been buried beneath a pile of partisan practices, cultural customs, institutional inventions, doctrinal deductions and sectarian sham. And we must reclaim the church from the world, not by taking it out of the world, but by taking the world out of it. These last two objectives will never be achieved until we accomplish the first. Jesus must again be crowned in our hearts as he has been coronated in heaven. Jesus the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, Son of God, and Lord of life. This is my creed, and upon it I propose to meet every other soul upon this earth who is willing to commit himself to it. In closing I ask you to hear this from the pen of Alexander Campbell:

"When the Messiah appeared as the founder of a new religion, systems of religion consisting of opinions and speculation upon matter and mind, upon God and nature, upon virtue and vice, had been adopted, improved, reformed, and exploded, time after time. That there was always something superfluous, something defective; something wrong, something

that could be improved, in every system of religion and morality, was generally felt, and at last was universally acknowledged. But the grandeur, sublimity, and beauty of the foundation of hope, and of ecclesiastical or social union, established by the author and founder of Christianity, consisted in this,— that the belief of one fact, and that upon the best evidence in the world, is all that is requisite, as far as faith goes, to salvation. The belief of this one fact, and submission to one institution expressive of it, is all that is required of Heaven to admission into the church . . . The one fact is expressed in a single proposition— that Jesus the Nazarene is the Messiah . . . The one institution is baptism into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

Grace and Peace

Contents

I have decided that, with the help of God, I will share with you, in these four lessons, some of the things which have impressed me as I read the first chapter of the first letter written to the Thessalonians. There will be nothing profound about what I have to say. Rather, I hope to present my thoughts in the simplest fashion.

Not long ago I visited the Saint Louis Zoo. It was animal feeding time and one of the keepers climbed a ladder and placed the provender for the giraffes in a wire basket high in a tree. A great many preachers act as if Jesus told Peter, "Feed my giraffes," but he did not. He did say, "Feed my sheep," and in order to do that one must put the fodder down where the sheep can reach it. I expect to keep my feet on the ground and stay close to earth.

The greatest temptation which I must resist, is that of delving into the historical background which makes the city of Thessalonica so fascinating and the words of the writers so interesting. None of the letters of the new covenant scriptures simply fell down from heaven, written and wrapped up in advance, and ready for instant delivery. Each one of them grew out of the human predicament and was written to meet a need or to supply a deficiency. To read them without taking into account the circumstances out of which they grew is like trying to diagnose a case while ignoring both symptoms and medical history.

However, in this case I must forego the pleasure of painting the scenery, in order to get on with the drama, and the naked stage must be dressed and colored by your own imagination. It is important that I remind you, however, that we are looking over the shoulder of an apostle and reading a personal letter written to a congregation of saints for whom he felt a deep and abiding affection. The new covenant scriptures are not a written code of legalistic requirements. Jesus did not nail one law to the cross and hand another one down.

The new covenant scriptures are a collection of love letters addressed to individuals and congregations. After all, Christianity did not begin with a book, but with a baby. It is not Jesus pointing us to a volume, but a volume pointing us to Jesus. The purpose of God's new revelation is not to develop great lawyers but loyal lovers. And what I say here will be dedicated to this purpose.

When Nell and I started dating, our courtship was carried on under rather trying conditions. I was traveling constantly conducting religious meetings throughout the United States, and my time was scheduled so fully I could not get free to journey to the southern part of Missouri to see her. But we wrote to one another every day for a year, until we finally decided to get married to avoid writer's cramp. After having wasted the best years of my life as a single man I married at the ripe age of twenty.

By this time I knew a love letter when I saw one. And I also knew how eagerly a person reads and thrills to every word written by one who is dear unto him. That is the feeling I now sustain to the letters tied with the ribbon of faith and preserved in that wonderful treasure chest called the Bible. This is truly my hope chest. It is not filled with souvenirs of a forgotten past, but with the glowing promises of a glorious future.

A few days ago I received a written request to visit a

congregation and conduct a study in depth for five days and nights. It was personally signed by the three elders as an indication that they were mutually interested in the work. It cheered me up to know that all of them were united in the effort. The letter to the Thessalonians was also a joint project. It was signed by Paul, Timothy and Silas. One was an apostle, one an evangelist, and the other a prophet, yet they combined their efforts, without jealousy, to write to the brethren who had been converted to Christ through their mutual endeavors.

You will note that the letter is addressed to "the church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ." This is interesting. It is not to the church of God, or the church of Christ. It is to the church of the Thessalonians. The word "church" is never used in the sacred scriptures to refer to a building, a structure, or even an organization. The church is people. We are in error when we talk about "going to church." It is the church that does the going. If we are not the church before we leave home, we'll not be when we get to where we are going!

I trust it will not offend you if I tell you that the word "church" should not even be in the Bible. It is not a translation of the original word *ekklesia* at all. It is really a sort of modified conglomeration of a wholly different word, not even related to the one it purports to translate. It comes to us from a combined form of *kurios* and *oikos*. The first is the word for "lord," and the second is the word for "house." It was borrowed from the days of feudalism, when the lord lived in a manor house atop the hill, and his serfs dwelled in rude huts below. There is not one thing in the word church or kirk, which defines, describes or designates a called-out people.

Alexander Campbell knew this when he offered a new translation to American readers, which he called "The Living Oracles." He did not once employ the word "church" in the text. He used "congregation" consistently. Perhaps the very best word

in our day would be "community," and this is the one used in *The Authentic Version*, the only new testament translation by a Jew. He has Jesus saying, "Upon that rock, I will found my Community, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

I do not for a moment think that this will gain the approval of the brethren with whom I am associated more directly. They have appropriated the term "Church of Christ," and used it to *denominate* a party, which is a polite word for sect. And Romans 16:16 is a handy textual tool with which to hammer other sects into subjection. It would ruin too many signboards and pulpit hangings, if instead of reading: "The Churches of Christ Salute You— Romans 16:16," we read it, "All the Christian communities send their regards." Most of us are seeking safety by squatting behind the right sign, rather than seeking salvation by submitting to the righteous Savior. If God judges us by the inscriptions on our signs or tombstones, we've got it made. We are generally "asleep in Jesus," under one or the other.

A community is a concourse of persons drawn together by a common tie. And the common tie which drew the early saints together was the firm conviction that Jesus is the Messiah, and God's Son. They were not united because of a theological philosophy, a formal creed, or a written confession. One does not need to read too much between the lines to know that some of the brethren in Thessalonica had previously been a swashbuckling, swaggering, hard-as-nails type. And no wonder, for the city was chiefly populated with soldiers mustered out of the imperial army by Augustus.

When Paul and Silas and Timothy first arrived in town, you will remember that a bunch of rabble-rousing infidels had enflamed the loungers who belonged to the "Spit, Whittle and Argue Club," and started an inner city riot. This yelling, rock-throwing mob, violating all civil rights, kicked the door in at the house of Jason, who was a relative of Paul, and looted the premises searching for the preachers. Paul and Silas had to be

spirited from the city at night under the cover of darkness.

In spite of all this furor, the faith got a toehold on the hearts of some of the Jewish leaders, and, in addition, a goodly number of Greek proselytes and a few influential women accepted Jesus. So the local commune of Jesus People actually constituted an underground movement which cut across racial and ethnic barriers, sexual differences and social lines. We must not forget this as we read the letters of Paul which were probably sometimes smuggled in, even at the risk of life.

It is not easy for us to remember that these brethren of ours had no church buildings, structures or edifices. They possessed no printing presses, mimeograph machines or duplicating devices. They had no offices, nurseries, libraries or educational wings. They produced no flyers, bulletins or mailing pieces. They had no Bibles, tracts or Sunday-School quarterlies. They were without television and radio. They could not tune into Herald of Truth, The Hour of Decision, or Revival Fires. They had no bumper stickers advising the pagans to "Read the Bible — It Will Scare Hell Out of You!"

They met in caves, catacombs, and third-floor lofts in the ghetto. They stealthily slipped down alleys to convene in private dwellings. There were no signs along the Via Egnatia, reading: "Church of Christ— Four Blocks South at 1200 Berean Road." It was hard enough to keep from getting your head cut off without telling the soldiers where to locate you, and advertising, "Everybody Welcome!"

When some people came in at the front door you always had to be ready to go out through the rear one. In those days the saints watched the door as intently as they now watch the clock.

So this was the way it was when the letter was written to the members of the commune in Thessalonica. And they could read it without distraction. No one was angry because the

housing committee had installed a blue pulpit rug instead of a red one. There was no grumbling because the hole in the asphalt of the parking lot had not been repaired, or because the air-conditioning unit was not functioning properly. There was no meeting of the board to discuss the startling news that the nervy Baptists had purchased the failing shopping center in the next block, and were going to put up an edifice which would make the one owned by "the loyal brethren" look like a root beer stand. Aside from the fact that a few elders were burned at the stake and a few deacons were fed to hungry lions, there was not too much excitement.

"To the Community of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." I like that! Every community of saints had both a physical and spiritual location. We belong on the map as well as in the Man. Our feet are always in the clay although our hearts are always in the skies. Geographically, these saints were in Thessalonica, on the great paved road leading from Rome. But transcendentally, they were in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ. They were on the way which came from Rome and in the Way who came from heaven.

The writers employ some interesting expressions to illustrate our dual relationship. For instance, in 1 Thessalonians 2:14, they mention "the communities of God in Judea which are in Christ Jesus." In Judea and in Christ Jesus. We are in the world as well as in Christ. And in the world we cannot escape tribulation. We are partakers of both the agony and the ecstasy.

It would be a good assignment for you, when you can find the time, to read the two letters to the Thessalonians, and underline the expression *Lord Jesus Christ* every time it occurs. I think you will be surprised at the number of times you will find it. And it is very important because of its implications. It includes the three-fold relationship of the Son of God to the saints, the world and God. As Lord he is the ruler of our lives, as

Jesus he is the Savior of the world, as Christ he is the anointed of the Father. Or, to put it another way, these signify the roles of authority, atonement and apostleship.

To be in Christ is to be identified with him, and to be a sharer in every facet of his life. As Lord we share in his direction, as Jesus we share in his death, and as the Christ we share in his destiny. We are governed and guided, saved and sanctified, grasped and glorified by the great Apostle and High Priest of our profession.

"Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ." There it is again. That is twice in the very first verse. But now I want to focus in on this salutation. One reason I want to do so is because most of my brethren read, "Grace be unto you, and peace," as if they had stepped on a spiritual banana peel, or hit an icy stretch on God's sidewalk.

They race through it like we used to say our childish prayers, as if the gates of glory would bang shut promptly at the stroke of 9:00 o'clock, P.M., and we had to get our order in or take our chances. "Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep; if I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take— Mama, can I have a glass of water?"

But there is a great deal involved in the greeting— grace and peace. In the first place, all mankind was divided into two groups, the Jews and the Greeks. When one Greek met another, he always said, "Charis," that is, "Grace to you." But a Jew always said, "Shalom," that is "Peace." And the Good News of Jesus is God's dynamic to save both Jew and Greek. Both were represented in the community at Thessalonica, and so this greeting was catholic, or universal. It embraced all. No one could feel inferior, left out or slighted.

With but two exceptions, Paul began all of his letters in this fashion. Indeed, every letter written to a congregation, or

group of congregations, began this way. Only in his letters to the younger preachers of the Good News, Timothy and Titus, did he add the third ingredient of mercy. These men were in dangerous spots and forced to endure hardships as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. And mercy represents God's attitude to those who are in distress. As W. E. Vine points out, "It assumes need on the part of him who receives it, and resources adequate to meet the need on the part of him that shows it."

There is one interesting feature about grace that I do not want to neglect mentioning. It seems to be a cherished word of Paul. Not only does he begin every letter that he writes with this word, but he also closes every one of them in the same way. He begins with grace and ends with grace. And Paul knew both the meaning and the power of grace.

He had been allowed some magnificent revelations and visions. God had lifted him up to the third heaven, and to keep him from becoming uplifted with elation and pride, he said, "There was given me a spike in the flesh, an emissary of Satan to prod me." He anxiously besought God three different times to rid him of this trial, but he said that God told him, "My grace is enough for you, for my power will be exhibited in full strength in your weakness." Yes, Paul knew what grace was. Do you know what it is?

In *The New Preaching*, **Joseph Fort Newton writes, "A British Tommy gave me a synopsis of the sermon, and I can still see his big blue eyes and hear his soft voice as he told me point by point, what the preacher had said. The subject was The Grace of God, and the Tommy closed his account with exquisite courtesy in these words: 'The Minister told us that the grace of God is plentiful, sufficient for all need, and near at hand, but he did not tell us what grace is; perhaps you, sir, will be good enough to do that.'" Like that British soldier I think it is important to know what grace is.**

And, at the very outset of any consideration of grace, as the term is used by the Holy Spirit, there are two things that are essentially a part of it. They are inseparably connected with it. They belong to the very essence of grace. One of these is beauty or charm. Grace is a beautiful word, a charming term. When the Greeks first began to use it, it no doubt designated physical beauty, for they were great admirers of this quality, as we can easily determine from their poetry and drama, as well as from their sculpture.

But words do not remain static. They grow and change as do the persons who use them. And *charis* came to be applied to inner qualities, to what we now call personality. When this happened, a gracious person was one who exhibited charming traits, such as kindness, politeness, hospitality and gentility. So the word graceful, which literally means to be full of grace, came to imply more than posture or carriage of body, and signified an inner nobility of character.

The second thing that belongs to grace in the scriptural context is that it is always a gift, and that it is bestowed freely, and without being earned or merited in any way. We can easily see how this came to be. The Greeks believed that physical beauty, as well as attributes of the soul, were gifts of the gods. Since aptitudes and abilities were manifested quite early in life, it was concluded that such *charismata* were wholly unearned, and were simply the free gifts of some deity.

Christianity captured the thoughts of men, as well as the words in which those thoughts were expressed and led them into captivity to Christ, making them his willing subjects. And never was a more prominent or important prisoner taken than the word *charis*, Under the influence of the creative Spirit it was transformed into a magnificent term which embraced the stooping down of God to share our earthly state, and bestow his very presence and self as a transforming gift, so that we could share his glory.

Grace is more than the love of God bestowed upon us as an attribute or characteristic. It is the God who is love, giving up glory and moving into the human sphere, being tested, tempted, tried, agonizing and sorrowing, and then triumphing over the human predicament and offering me not a handout, or even a hand up, but taking me up in his own arms, whispering to me that in him I am safe evermore.

It is both reasonable and scriptural that if God freely gave his Son for me, he will freely give me all things with his Son. Henry Nelson Wieman said, "The grace of God is the good which God puts into each concrete situation over and above all that man can do or plan or even imagine."

In a particularly beautiful statement, William Barclay wrote, "Grace is that power of God which clothes a man with day-to-day fortitude and strength. Grace is that power of God which adorns a man's life with lovely things. Grace is a man's day-to-day defence and inspiration. Grace is not only the strength of the mountain top; it is the source of strength for the ordinary road of the everyday." Indeed the word grace is a beautiful and charming word!

Now we come to the consideration of another beautiful word in the greeting to the Thessalonians— *peace***. And we must be very careful or we will be influenced in our understanding by the warped views of this decadent age. Because of the fierce wars which have raged and disgraced the history of sinful man, we tend to think of peace as that state which exists between the periods when the guns are firing and men are being mowed down like ripened grain, or blown to bits. No wonder we think of peace as a fragile thing, a dove flying in the midst of vultures. No wonder we talk of uneasy truces.**

But all of this has little to do with the peace of which Paul wrote. Paul was a Jewish rabbinical student, and he knew that *shalom* **primarily signified wholeness. When a wall was being**

built and the last stone was put in place, and the proud workmen stepped back to admire their handiwork, "the peace of the wall" was realized. The wall was whole. When one was filling a large jar or cistern with water and the last container was emptied into it, and the water rose to the brim, the "peace of the water' was obtained. The jar was full.

God is rebuilding our lives and when he brings us to our full potential and fills up the broken places and gaps in our character, we have peace. God is filling our hearts which so long were empty and dry, and when we are brimming over with his love, we have peace. Hearts are like jars, they do not all have the same depth. But God can fill them all, and you can say as did the sweet psalmist of yesteryear, "My cup runneth over."

There was another sense in which peace was used. When long practice sessions had brought harmony to an orchestra, and every hand moved in unison across the strings, peace was attained. And when the broken strings of our hearts are repaired, and discord no longer jars the ear, and we vibrate in tune with the infinite, that is peace. Peace is harmony with God, the music plucked from the harp by the fingers of faith. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God."

The world cannot provide this peace. It can only come through union of the human and the divine. There is a very significant statement made by Jesus which I want to mention. He said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you." The word *leave* is used in the sense of a bequest. Peace has been willed to us. You will recall that on the night Jesus was born in the stable, the celestial choir sang, "Peace on earth to men of good will." Jesus brought peace when he came to earth, but he did not take it with him when he left. He willed it to the saints.

But his peace is not the peace of the world, and he does not give it as the world gives. He was the bridge across the chasm

between God and man. He spans the awful gulf eroded by sin. He took our broken lives, fragmented by sin, and put them all together again. He gathered up the shattered sherds and fitted them back in place and glued them with such love that God can once again use the earthen vessels to his glory. That is peace, the peace of God!

Ragnar Bring says, "The word 'peace' represents the Hebrew *shalom*, a creative peace involving spiritual and physical growth, strength, and power in contrast to anxiety, conflict, and everything that retards, divides and injures life. This includes both physical life and life in Christ."

William Hendriksen writes that peace is "the conviction of reconciliation through the blood of the cross, true spiritual wholeness and prosperity." Someone else has described it as "the composure of a holy affection, the sunshine of a settled purpose, and the sunlight of unclouded communion with God."

In 1887, a man by the name of Peter P. Bilhorn, found himself humming over and over the words, "Oh, wonderful, wonderful peace." He sat down at the table to write a poem into which these words would be incorporated, and ended up with a song which is in many of our hymnals. When he came to the fourth stanza, these words seemed to flow from his pen:

"In Jesus for peace I abide,

And as I keep close to his side,/p>

There's nothing but peace doth betide,

Sweet peace, the gift of God's love."

Our only hope for peace is in Jesus. True peace is from above. It is the gift of God. The world cannot give it, for the world does not have it. Either we must seek that peace and ensue

it, as the Bible says, or we will perish. So long as we trust in planes and tanks, the modern horses and chariots of Egypt, so long will we know only agony and bitterness of spirit. No one ever caught this idea better than General Douglas MacArthur, who presided over the surrender of the Japanese, and said at the time:

"We have had our last chance. If we do not now devise some greater and more equitable system, Armageddon will be at our door. The problem basically is theological and involves a spiritual recrudescence and improvement of human character. It must be of the spirit, if we are to save the flesh."

May I in closing borrow again the words of the brethren of old, and say to all of the saints here present, "Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

Three Things to Remember

Contents

I deeply regret the need of disappointing you, but I must confess that I am unable to do what the world generally refers to as "preaching a sermon." Did it ever occur to you that no apostle, prophet or evangelist mentioned in the new covenant scriptures, ever "preached a sermon"? They preached the gospel, the kingdom of God, the word, the faith, the resurrection of the dead, and the baptism of repentance. They preached Jesus, and they preached peace. But not one of them ever "preached a sermon."

It was Origen who was credited with being "the father of the sermon," and he lived about two hundred years after Jesus was born. He was president of the first theological school, which was planted in Alexandria, Egypt, and it was this institution which the historian Mosheim said became the grave of primitive Christianity. After the days of Origen the church was preached to death instead of taught how to live.

As you probably realize the word "sermon" is not once found in the Authorized Version of the scriptures. This should cause some concern to those who profess to "speak where the Bible speaks and remain silent where the Bible is silent." In our day there is a growing revolt against the kind of preaching that we have been doing, since it neither comforts the afflicted, nor afflicts the comfortable. It should probably be put out in a long-play album with the label, "Preaching to Sleep By."

For the benefit of those of you who are tired from last night and who find it a little difficult to think at this hour of the morning, let me say that it never bothers me when people in my audience take a nap. I consider it a compliment of the highest order. I suspect that they feel safe and relaxed. They say to themselves, "You don't have to stay awake and watch Brother Ketcherside. He knows what he is doing and will not swamp the boat. Just take it easy, and relax, and he will get us through safely to the invitation song and never lose a passenger."

Sometimes those who do like Cain, and visit the land of Nod, actually give emphasis to what I am saying. Recently I was conducting a morning question forum and one dear old sister began to snore lustily in the key of C and in four-four time. Someone asked the question, "What do you feel is the real problem of the church in our day?" My explanation and her punctuation went about like this. "The gravest problem of the brethren, as I view it, is their apathy and unconcern. (Snore). They are asleep at the switch. (Snore). They are drifting and dreaming. (Snore). They have no idea what is going on around them. (Snore)."

But I must get on with my examination and analysis of the letter to the Thessalonians. I certainly do not want to be in the position of the long-winded preacher who was holding what was intended to be a revival in a rural congregation. Every night he dragged on and on, missing all of the good places to stop. The crowds grew smaller and smaller. Finally, he asked an old farmer what the trouble might be. The old brother replied, "I don't want to tell you how to preach, but my advice is that when you're through pumpin' you should let go the handle."

I want to ask you a rather pointed question. What do you think that brethren who once were associated with your congregation will remember about you? Will they recall envy, jealousy, strife, and squabbling? Will they remember gossiping, backbiting and character assassination? Will they call to mind

the stubbornness and dogmatism of some who were determined to rule or ruin, boss or bust, drive or destroy? Will they remember only strife and division, and the heartaches accompanying these? Let me read for you a statement addressed to a community of saints by three brethren who knew them and loved them.

"We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father" (1 Thess. 1:2, 3).

There are three actions referred to upon the part of the writers— giving thanks, making mention, and remembering. It was the last which motivated the first two. What they remembered prompted them to give thanks and also to make mention of the saints in their prayers. This is interesting because I know a lot of preachers who wish they could forget what they know about some of the places where they have been. I also know some places that wish they had never heard of some preachers who have been there.

There were three things about the brethren which were retained in the memory of Paul, Silas, and Timothy, but before we discuss them, let us say a little about their prayer life. A great many brethren never think to give thanks for those from whom they are separated. Their motto seems to be, "Out of sight, out of mind." An old Indian chief was asked what lesson he had learned from civilization. His reply was "Ingratitude." And Shakespeare wrote that, "The sting of ingratitude is sharper than a serpent's tooth."

Another thing which impresses me is that the writers made mention of the congregation in their prayers. A lot of brethren take aim and then fire a blank at God. We need to mention names in our prayers. *Blanket* **prayers may be the result of**

mental woolgathering.

You'll notice that the term "without ceasing" occurs here and elsewhere in conjunction with prayer. For a long time translators were hazy on the meaning of the Greek word. When I was much younger I thought it meant without stopping, and I wondered when one would get his breath. But a few years ago discovery was made in Egypt of an old letter written on papyrus and dating back to apostolic days. In it the writer used the term translated "without ceasing" when describing an "incessant cough." So the word means "constantly recurring." If one prays regularly every day he prays without ceasing. Not long ago a brother in the Lord told me that he and his wife had read the Bible without ceasing for ten years, a chapter each day.

1. WORK OF FAITH

The first thing the writers commend is the work of faith. W. E. Vine says this refers to the initial act of turning to God, the response of the heart of integrity to the Good News about the Risen Lord. In verse 9 of this chapter, we learn that the Thessalonians turned to God from idols. The word for "turn" is the word translated "converted." And conversion is always the voluntary act of the individual in response to the presentation of truth. In spite of the radio preaching constantly assaulting the air waves in this day, it is demonstrably true that not once does the Bible say that God, Christ, or the Holy Spirit ever turned or converted any person. Turning to God is an act of will, a deliberate choice.

The proclamation of the Good News has been committed to men. It is not now the work of Jesus, the angels, or the Holy Spirit. We have this treasure in earthen vessels. It is not the privilege or prerogative of celestial beings. It was earthly disciples, men in the flesh, who were commissioned to go into all the world. They were to proclaim the Good News to every

creature, every created being. It is God's purpose that the message be taken to men by men.

Faith is the belief of testimony, and testimony has to do with facts. All testimony to be believed must be rendered credible. It must be validated for one cannot believe that which is incredible. But once rendered credible, the honest heart responds to it spontaneously and gladly. So faith becomes the motivating force which causes us to turn our backs upon a life of sin and turn our faces toward him who is our hope and our salvation.

One of our failings is to give a glib answer without thinking through what we are saying. If you ask the average person to define faith, he will quote, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." But that is not a definition. It is a description, and there is a great deal of difference between defining a thing and describing it.

Hebrews 11:1 informs us of the substance of faith, but if I say that the substance of a table is wood, I do not define a table. Actually, the writer is pointing out to us the ingredients of faith. As respects those things for which we hope, faith is a firm conviction; as respects the realm of the unseen it is a firm confidence. But I can list the ingredients of a cake without defining cake.

One day I was meditating about the faith which justifies, that is, which places a man in that position where God can regard him as guiltless, not reckoning sin unto him. As Paul puts it, "Happy is the man against whom the Lord does not count sin." Really that is my only ground for hope and I know it, and I like to think about it and ponder over it.

I became deeply involved in what Paul said about Abraham who is called the very father of the faithful. He was the first person of whom it is said that he believed God, and his

belief was counted unto him for justification. He was exonerated of guilt and his faith was reckoned as rectitude. And the beauty of the whole thing is that the promise of God is to all of Abraham's seed, even to those who are his children by faith, and I am one of them.

Abraham had no physical basis upon which to ground his hope that he could become the father of many nations. Everything was against his right to expect God's promise to be fulfilled. But he ignored all of the obstacles and triumphed over all of the doubts. "His faith never weakened with consciousness of the impotence of his own body— he was nearly a hundred years old at the time— and of Sarah's incapacity for motherhood. He did not challenge the promise of God incredulously, but strengthened by faith, he gave credit to God."

And now we come to the capsheaf. Here is what faith is all about. It is absolute trust in God regardless of circumstances. The book says that Abraham was fully persuaded that what God had promised, he was able to perform. The very next verse adds, "And therefore it was counted to him for justification." Faith is complete reliance upon God's word. It is the undaunted conviction that the performance of God will match the promises of God.

When this conviction is kindled in the heart of a man, it results in commitment to the one who is the object of faith. It is interesting to remember that the word translated "commit" in the King James Version is the word for faith. The writers of the Thessalonian letter remembered the joyous acceptance of Jesus by those who heard the Message.

There is a wonderful statement made later in this letter, in chapter 2:13. "For this cause also we thank God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe."

The word of God here is the gospel, the Message of hope, and when the Thessalonians heard it, they recognized that it was not simply a dissertation from men.

They saw beyond the messengers, and received the Message for what it truly was, the word of God, the disclosure of heaven's will. And the gospel became operative in the lives of those who believed it. They made a complete change, not only of direction but also of dimension. It was so profound that it was like being born again. They turned from idols to serve the living and true God. They became a new creation. Old things had passed away, all things had became new.

2. LABOR OF LOVE

The second thing which impressed the writers about the Thessalonian brethren was their labor of love. Just as the motivation for their action in turning to God was faith, so the dynamic for their service to one another was love. Faith brings us together in the Lord and love holds us together in him.

A famous newspaper once sponsored a contest in which a prize was to be awarded for the best definition of love. Here is the winner. "Love is the doorway, through which the human soul passes from selfishness to service and from solitude to kinship with all mankind." It is evident from the letter we are studying that the Thessalonians had passed through the doorway from selfishness to service.

And this reminds me of a beautiful thought which occurs in the translation of a statement in 1 John 3:14, as given by J. B. Phillips. "We know that we have crossed the frontier from death unto life, because we love the brethren." John adds that the one who does not love his brother remains in the No-Man's Land of death. Have you crossed the border which separates death and life? Is there a way by which you can know if you may stand up and breathe more easily? John says the test is love for the

brethren. If we hate them we are still wallowing in the swamps of death.

The word for love is the Greek *agape*. It is a special word in the new covenant scriptures. The Holy Spirit captured it for the *use* of God, and invested it with new value, and gave it a depth of meaning which it did not have before. It literally took on a new dimension of height and depth, so it can be said that God is love. I want to mention some of the attributes of this love. This will enable you to determine if you possess it and if it is the motivating factor in your every act of life.

1. This love is not a mere emotion or passion. You cannot command an emotion. But you can command this love because Jesus said, "A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another as I have loved you." Commands are given to be obeyed, and obedience is an act of the will. If Jesus tells us to love our brethren we must do it. Because this is an act of will, and not merely of our feelings, we can even love our enemies. Someone sent me a plaque for my wall which reads: "Love Your Enemies— It Drives Them Nuts!" The command is correct, the motivation is questionable.

2. This love does not manifest itself because the object is worthy or deserving. If it did God could never have loved us at all, and we would all have been damned. *Agape* is creative. It conveys its own value to the object or person and invests that object or person with its sense of worth so that love is possible.

3. This love is never hampered, restricted, or deterred by external circumstances. It is steadfast and not intermittent, constant and not occasional. Jesus never got anyone out of what he was in to love him. He loved him to get him out of what he was in. He did not say, "Straighten up your life and I will love you." He loved people and they straightened up their lives.

4. This love is not merely the giving of *things* to supply

needs, but rather the sharing of self. Since God is love, when he sent the Son to share our lot it amounted to love becoming embodied, so that, in beholding *Jesus*, we could see divine love activated in our behalf. One can give *things* as a blind to keep from giving self, or as an escape from becoming truly involved. Love is involvement of one's life in the life situation of others.

5. This love is always active and not passive. It is ever seeking avenues of service. It is outgoing and outreaching in constantly expanding circles of influence. It is more a demonstration than it is an affirmation. One who truly loves another must do something to show it. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." The word to be emphasized in that statement is the word "so." God loved the world in such a manner that he had to do something about it.

Love validates every gift that we receive and use. If we had the power to employ the languages of men and the dialect of heaven, without love we would become like a sounding brass or a clashing cymbal. Love also validates every gift we bestow. If we gave all of our earthly possessions to feed the world's poor, and offered our bodies to be burned at the stake, it would profit nothing without love.

Love labors to help others who are caught up in the human predicament. It shares the burdens, carries loads, and relieves distress. It is the introduction of the God-dimension into human problems, the creativity of heaven meeting the tragedy of earthly existence.

God is its author, Jesus is its exemplar, the Holy Spirit its conveyor. It is the criterion by which the world judges our discipleship and the rod by which we measure our own spirituality. It is the light of the world and the life of the spirit. It is the oasis in the desert, the guiding star in the sky, and the mountain peak of glory and grace.

3. PATIENCE OF HOPE

Faith, hope and love— these are the three abiding principles when all else has fulfilled its destiny and vanished. When tongues are no more, when prophecies cease, and when knowledge granted as a gift, has had its day, these three continue unabated. And the community of saints in Thessalonica had them all. They had the faith that worked, the love that labored, and the hope that endured. No wonder they were always fresh in the *memory* of those who knew them best.

Their patience was engendered by their hope. Patience is the steadfast endurance which causes one to keep on, especially under difficulty, or when facing trial or persecution. It is putting up with things which go against the grain. It is making allowance for those who do not work the way you would like to see it done. It is resisting the impulse to fly off the handle. And it is staying with the thing that needs doing even though you are tempted to throw up your hands and walk away from it all.

In Mexico there is a famous statue by Jesus Garcia. It is called "In Spite Of." During the time the sculptor was working on the piece he lost his right hand in an accident. He resolved that he would finish the statue so he learned to carve with his left hand and painstakingly continued, doing even more meticulous work than before. When the statue was completed it was called "In Spite Of."

A Chinese student told how he was experiencing difficulty with his scholastic assignments in college. He wrote one thesis three times and still it did not suit him. In a fit of anger he rolled his manuscript up and tossed it into a clump of bushes, and started back to town to resign from the college. On his way he saw an aged and wrinkled peasant laboriously rubbing a small crowbar against a rock. "What are you doing?" he asked. "I'm making a needle," came the reply. Ashamed at his own lack of persistence, the student went back, retrieved his manuscript and

eventually won his degree.

It was Ralph Waldo Emerson who wrote, "The hero is no braver than an ordinary man, but he is brave five minutes longer." And it was James J. Corbett, once the heavyweight boxing champion of the world, who said that the secret of the successful fighter was to fight one more round than his opponents. He should have known because his first fight, with Peter Jackson, resulted in a draw after sixty-one rounds.

There are few men who have struggled with such patience as did Thomas A. Edison while trying to discover an effective filament for the electric light bulb. One after another of the substances he tested in his laboratory proved unsuitable but he redoubled his effort, sending men to China, Japan, Asia, South America, Ceylon and Burma to seek for fibers and grasses. But our own nights are turned into day because of his never-say-die spirit.

I have always thrilled to the story of Glenn Cunningham, who once broke the record for running a mile. When he was still a young boy he became badly crippled in a schoolhouse fire. When he left the hospital the doctors told his parents that if he ever walked again it would be a miracle. But slowly and painfully he forced his legs to act, and then began following a walking plow, so he could lean upon the handles while maneuvering his feet over the uneven ground in the furrows. Hour after hour, day after day, he exercised his legs until he broke all track records for the mile run. This is truly running with patience the course that is set before one.

Not alone in the Bible is patience linked with hope. The philosophers of the past have had a maxim that "patience is the art of hoping." Hope has to do with the unseen and is always related to the future. Paul writes, "For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we

with patience wait for it" (Romans 8:24, 25).

Hope is a combination of desire and expectation, in equal proportions. There are some things that you expect but do not desire. You cannot be said to hope for them. When I was a youngster the old folk went on the basis that the worse a thing tasted, the better medicine it would be. Of all the vile tasting concoctions which man has devised none is worse than castor oil. When I became ill and developed a fever I expected that they would hold my nose and drench me with castor oil. But anyone who thinks that I desired it has another and a lot better "think" coming! So I did not hope for castor oil!

There are other things that you desire but do not expect. We were desperately poor and yet when I saw my first Packard I think I desired it. However, I did not expect it, so I would gladly have settled for a Model T Ford. Desire is not transmuted into hope until it is accompanied with the same degree of expectation as wishfulness.

It is a grand thing to know that the saints in Thessalonica had a hope that reached beyond the misty flats of the Jordan of death. And that hope gave strength to endure. It developed patience in spite of hardships. In the very next chapter the writers remind them that they became "followers of the churches of God which in Judea are in Christ Jesus, for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews."

All of this ought to make us bow our heads and blush in shame when we think of the trivialities which cause us to lose faith. It is absurd and ridiculous to fall out with one another over some of the little opinions which have caused us to fragment and split the body of God's blessed Son in the past. Surely we will be held accountable in the last day for our lack of patience and forbearance, for our intolerance and dogmatism. We need to recapture again the work of faith, labor of love, and

patience of hope, which were so commendable in the days when the apostles were still upon earth.

Faith is the key which unlocks for us the door to the treasures of God's wonderful grace; love is the glowing spirit which causes us to share the bounty freely with others; and hope is that attitude of heart which confidently expects that there are other rooms beyond and greater treasures yet to come. Faith is the cord which binds us to the cross of yesterday, love is the dynamic which bonds us to the Christ of today, and hope is that joyous expectation which beckons us to the crown tomorrow.

Faith is the unfurling of the sail to catch the winds of God. Love is the vessel in which we are transported across the stormy waves of life. And hope is the anchor to the soul, reaching down into unseen depths and fastening upon the Rock of Ages. I cannot see the anchor but I can feel the tension upon the line and I know that tomorrow will be better than today! And now abideth faith, hope and love— these three— but the greatest of these is love!

The Dynamite of God

Contents

It was in June, 1957, that American television viewers first saw Tariri. He had been a Peruvian headhunter, a jungle dweller living in a world of fear and superstition, driven by centuries of tradition to stalk other tribesmen and kill them, and to cut off their heads as grisly trophies of the successful hunt. But a great change had taken place, and now he was appearing on the Ralph Edwards show in Hollywood called "This Is Your Life."

Here is what happened as told in the unadorned speech of this primitive chief of the remote Shapra tribe. "I had been angry and thought, I want to kill all the upriver people. But God said, No. God won. I was never like this in the old days. I was powerful, and I was always angry. I thought a lot about killing. Because I used to kill that kind of people, word got around about me, news gets around about me now. 'It is because Tariri loves God that he does not come to kill us,' they say. 'It is as if there were no Tariri. Even though Tariri was a killer, God changed him.'"

How did God do it? The answer is simple. He did it through the dedication of a woman, Rachel Saint. It was her brother, Nate Saint, who was pilot of the missionary plane which carried four other men and himself into Auca country and to their death from the spears of those whom they had sought to reach with the message of Jesus. When news came of the death of the men, the missionary wives and sisters resolved to stay on,

and they did so, to witness the triumph of Christ over the very ones who had killed the proclaimers of the Good News.

Rachel Saint had taught Tariri, chief of the powerful tribe, and had watched the change which God wrought in his heart and that of his family. To this very day his son, Tsirimpo, is ministering to a group of tribal believers, whose thirst for human bloodletting already seems like a bad dream from the misty past.

Several years ago, a magazine which is one of the most popular in the world, printed the astounding story of an island in the South Pacific, which had been inhabited by people who were cannibalistic, crude and barbarous. During the war with Japan the island was taken as an observer base, and several years after the surrender of Japan an investigating team visited it to see what had happened to the natives who had disappeared into the bush where they remained during military occupancy.

The members of the team were astounded to find a clean village inhabited by hard-working and polite natives, whose moral conduct was exemplary. Hardly able to believe their own eyes they enquired what had happened. The American air observers had adopted a young boy whom they found skulking not far from camp, and for pastime had taught him to read and speak English. When they evacuated the island, one of the men gave him a New Testament, and told him to read it and do what it said, and he would live forever.

That boy read and translated every word over and over again, and the whole tribe accepted what was read as a message from the skies, since it had been brought by men in a plane dropping out of the clouds. In their simplicity they were trying to follow the directions as nearly as possible, and their lives had been completely changed. They had ceased to drink or even to make fermented liquors, and they no longer fought with one another. They had developed an advanced ideal of sexual purity,

and had banished selfishness and greed from their lives.

Leslie D. Weatherhead relates an intriguing story in his book, *In Quest of a Kingdom*. It is the tale about a man who was making a speech at a missionary convention of which he was the chairman. He declared that he had helped to found a flourishing community of Christians in a remote part of India, even though he had never been out of England. When he was five years old he had a penny which he wanted to donate to mission work, but he would not put it in the brown missions box with the slot in the top. He was not sure that the pennies which went into the box would ever be used to purchase Bibles.

Fortunately, the aged minister, willing to gratify his stubborn whim, agreed to sell him a copy of the New Testament for his penny. The minister wrote the child's name and address in the front of the book and gave it to a missionary to pass along to someone in India. One day a native who had walked several days and many miles to reach the mission station and ask for a copy of the testament was given the book the boy had purchased.

Twenty years went by and nothing was heard of the incident. Then a missionary went to a distant community where he was certain the gospel had never been heard. He was surprised when he began to expound the scriptures to see the excitement and delight that his words were causing. He stopped speaking and began to enquire about the enthusiasm. No preacher had ever visited the area before. But the little Christian community had been born, instructed and edified by the man who had walked so many miles, and by the book he had brought back, a book purchased for a penny given by a little boy of five in a distant part of the world.

I have not cited these incidents because of the romance of their nature. I want you to realize that God's word can still effect powerful changes in our day. Its potency has not ebbed out. It has had no leakage. The little girl, when arguing with her

sister who said Timothy was the last book of the Bible, was right when she insisted, "I tell you the Bible does not end in Timothy, it ends in Revolutions." Toyohiko Kagawa wrote, "The New Testament is a wonderful instrument for purity and for holiness. When you start a Bible movement, it means revolution, a quiet revolution against darkness and crime."

It is extremely important that we remember this, because we live in an age of skepticism and in a world of doubt. Men who do not deny that the power of the gospel toppled the corrupt Caesars from their thrones, and swept across the ancient pagan world like a prairie fire, are a little reticent about crediting such force to it in our day. We are victims of the corroding influence of the world about us.

We are accustomed to reservoirs of power which drain away and go flat. Flashlight batteries which produce a shining beam at first soon grow dim from usage and cease to be effective. Automobile batteries generally last only until the guarantee expires, and when one runs out the other runs down. In a world of manufacturers accused of planned obsolescence it is hard for us to believe that something which was generated nineteen centuries ago can maintain its potential.

Coupled with this is a fallacious notion that anything old can no longer be valid. For awhile we were subjected to the raucous cry that we should not listen to one who is over thirty. Fortunately, those who raised the cry are now over thirty and the din has subsided. A thing is not necessarily good because it has recently arrived, nor is it necessarily bad because it has been around awhile. Not everything perishes with the using.

Any rationalization which suggests that God's word has lost its effectiveness overlooks several factors. One is that the revelation is vitalized by the Holy Spirit. It is thus alive and energetic and sharper than a sword with two edges. W. A. Visser 't Hooft, of the World Council of Churches said, "In Holland the

people thought that the Bible must contain dynamite, because the Nazis were so anxious to destroy it, so they reopened its pages to find the dynamite— and they found it."

Another thing is that God has promised that his word will outlast the material universe. A black brother told his audience, "When the end of the world comes I'm going to lay my Bible down and stand on it, because God said that heaven and earth will pass away, but my word will not pass away. I had rather be standing on the Bible than standing on the earth, and I am just going to stand on it until I am caught up." A voice from the audience shouted out, "Amen, brother, I'm not waiting for the undertaker, I'm waiting for the uppertaker."

Of course this naturally raises the question of why the gospel had such an amazing effect in the days when the apostles proclaimed it, and why it has such little impact in our day. Certainly there is no simple answer, but we need to investigate the manner in which Paul presented it, for we are well aware that even dynamite in the hands of an unskilled user can be both ineffective and dangerous.

Perhaps there is no place where we can better study the technique of Paul than at Thessalonica. The second chapter of his first letter is a veritable arsenal of facts related to how we should regard the gospel and those who are hearers. In the first verse the apostle says, "For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain." He then reminds them of his attitude and effort in a remarkable way.

But I am especially interested for the moment in verse 5, of the first chapter. Here in one sentence we have the four items about the way in which the gospel came, and which kept the entrance from being in vain. Listen! "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and with the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance."

We must not conclude that because it came not in word only, that it did not come in word at all. It is a grand truth that when God proposed to communicate his will to man, he chose the highest form of communication which men use in communicating with each other, that of speech. And human speech makes use of sounds, which properly combined, transmit thoughts and concepts from one mind to another.

Words are tools, and it is obvious that one may exhibit greater skill if he has more and better tools with which to work. But we must not be trapped into believing that we can do nothing until we develop a sophisticated vocabulary. David Lipscomb used to say that any person who could give another directions by which he could find the postoffice, could tell him how to get to heaven.

It is possible that we may actually obscure the divine message by resorting to what Paul calls "the words which man's wisdom teaches." He asserted that when he went to Corinth he declared "the attested truth of God without display of fine words or wisdom." And he said, "The word I spoke, the gospel I proclaimed did not sway you with subtle arguments."

In Romans 16:18 the saints are warned against those who "seduce the minds of innocent people with smooth and specious words," and in 2 Timothy 2:14 the brethren are cautioned not to strive about words to no profit. Repeatedly the scriptures speak of vain words, empty words, and idle words. It is not the proficiency in words which makes one a faithful proclaimer. The wise king of old said, "A fool's voice is known by a multitude of words."

The gospel is news, good news, and news is best conveyed in words. The one who would share the news with others, must reveal the word of God in the words of men. But it takes more than mere words. We may confuse the salvation with the vehicles in which it is delivered, and if so, we may admire the

vehicles to such a degree that we never embrace the salvation. It would then be a little like a man who adores his automobile and neglects his wife.

Paul and his helpers are explicit in reminding the Thessalonians how the message of heaven was brought, and received. If we can get this picture in our minds we can understand our responsibility. Chapter two, as we have previously mentioned, is a gold mine for the eager student, and every preacher should analyze it to ascertain what should be our correct attitudes and motives.

1. The gospel was boldly proclaimed. 'We declared the gospel of God to you frankly and fearlessly, by the help of our God" (verse 2).

2. The motives of the proclaimers were above reproach. "The appeal we make never springs from error or base motive: there is no attempt to deceive" (verse 3).

3. God's terms regulated the proclamation. "God has approved us as fit to be entrusted with the Gospel, and on those terms we speak" (verse 4).

4. There was no appeal to popularity. "We do not curry favor with men; we need only the favor of God, who is continually testing our heart" (verse 4).

5. There was no indulgence in flattery for personal gain. "Our words have never been flattering words, as you have cause to know, nor, as God is our witness, have they ever been a cloak for greed" (verse 5) .

6. There was gentleness in approach. "We were as gentle with you as a nurse caring fondly for her children" (verse 7).

7. There was deep love manifested. "With such yearning love we chose to impart to you not only the gospel of God but

our very selves, so dear had you become to us" (verse 8).

8. The lives of the proclaimers matched their message. "We call you to witness, yes and God himself, how devout and just and blameless was our behavior to you who are believers" (verse 10).

9. There was individual fatherly concern and discipline. "As you well know, we dealt with you one by one, as a father deals with his children, appealing to you by encouragement, as well as by solemn injunction, to live lives worthy of the God who calls you into his kingdom and glory" (verses 11, 12).

10. It was received as a divine and not as a human disclosure. "We thank God continuously, because when we handed on God's message, you received it, not as the word of men, but as what it truly is, the very word of God at work in you who hold the faith" (verse 13).

11. The faithful obedience of the consecrated hearers made them the joy of the proclaimers. "For after all, what hope or joy or crown of pride is there for us, what indeed but you, when we stand before our Lord Jesus at his coming. It is you indeed who are our glory and our pride" (verse 19).

The gospel did not simply come in word, but also in power. It is an interesting thing that when we read this term we generally think of miracles. Perhaps this stems from the fact that there is no unique word for miracle in the new covenant scriptures. The word so translated is the word for power. Transliterated, it becomes our English *dynamic***.**

But it is a mistake to equate the word invariably with signs and wonders. There is no mention of such demonstrations at Thessalonica, and to always link power with special manifestations is to ignore the fact that there is an inherent force in the gospel which is of its very essence, as is the case with dynamite. To postulate that there is no power except when it

explodes in a special manner is to do an injustice to the nature of the gospel.

It is argued by those who disagree with what I am saying that I am substituting the enthusiasm of the messenger for the power of the gospel. That may not be a serious crime seeing that enthusiasm literally means "indwelt by God." And certainly it is true that the effect of a message will be governed to some extent by whether a speaker is listless and apathetic or energetic and forceful.

All of us have heard of the preacher who was holding forth to small audiences in a hall on one side of a street, while an actor was playing to capacity crowds twice daily in a theater directly across from him. When they met at a luncheon the preacher asked, "Why is it that you attract so many more listeners, who even pay to get in to see and hear you, when I am proclaiming the truth, and you are presenting fiction?" The actor replied, "Perhaps it is because I present my fiction as if it were truth, while you present your truth as if it were fiction."

But there is a power in the Message which is not conditioned upon the personality of the messenger. The Message is essentially news, and it is news of such a nature that the person who believes it will be moved, changed and transformed. If this were not the case there would be no accounting for the well-attested circumstances in which people have had nothing but the written word and yet have been completely re-oriented in their life styles. They never heard or saw a gospel preacher and certainly never saw a miracle worker.

If the Word of God is embodied in the words the Spirit has selected, then that Word is the animating, vitalizing principle of those words. The letters and symbols become the members of the body of truth, but truth itself is the spirit without which that body and those members would be dead. Just as Christ invaded the earth in a human body, so now the Eternal Thought

permeates the world in a body of human language. And just as one was crucified in a gray yesterday so the other is often nailed to the cross in the shining present.

The gospel came also in the Holy Spirit. Of course the Holy Spirit came also in the gospel. But there is a difference. The Holy Spirit cannot be confined, enclosed or encompassed in a message, not even in a divine message. The Holy Spirit can and does use a message, but to argue that the Spirit cannot, therefore, freely move is to abuse the Spirit. What the Spirit does, and what he can do are two different things. The Spirit is not the source or fountain of authority or power, but a divine agent of it.

No one here today even questions that the Spirit operated through signs, wonders and miracles in the ministry of the apostles, the special envoys of Jesus to an alien world. In the first place, he provided credentials as a validation of their claim to represent a ruler whose throne was in a different realm and invisible to his earthbound subjects. Earthly ambassadors required human credentials, but heavenly ambassadors required divine credentials.

Accordingly, signs, wonders and miracles, are called "the signs of an apostle." They are just such things as human reason would demand of one who came announcing that he had a word of reconciliation from a heavenly monarch with whom we had been at enmity. All credentials are subject to forgery, and there can be lying signs and wonders. For this reason the message which is alleged to be confirmed must be consistent with the divine purpose, and the credentials must be consistent with divine power. If the credentials appear to be genuine but the communication is out of harmony with the divine will, the ambassadors must be rejected. Certainly if men appeared before a foreign ruler and showed credentials indicating that they represented our nation, and then, submitted proposals wholly unworthy of such a government as the United States, their

message would be rejected even though their credentials appeared to be in order.

Again, the Holy Spirit confirmed the message with signs, wonders and demonstrations of power. This simply means that it was rendered credible to the human mind. Since belief is the result of the application of the mind to testimony related to fact, and since one cannot believe that which appears to him as incredible, it is essential that any testimony must be confirmed, validated and rendered reasonable to be accepted. Again, testimony related to the material requires only material proof, while that related to the spiritual requires spiritual proof.

I have examined carefully the credentials of the envoys and the communication of their message. I am fully persuaded that the men were called, qualified and commissioned by the Son of God during his earthly sojourn, and that they exercise authority under him through the terms of the treaty which they executed in his name. I have also become convicted that their message is true and that my hope of eternal glory depends upon my embracing it and enthroning it as the very basis of my life.

Jesus did many more mighty works on earth than are recorded. The reason for this is quite simple. In his journeys he met those in various areas who were afflicted by the same infirmities, and a repetition of miracles was required. But when the time came to write them down the Spirit exercised selectivity, choosing only those essential to make believers of men possessed of honest hearts. So John writes, "Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples which are not written in this book, but these are written that you might believe." I am happy and thrilled to say that I do believe these records, fully, completely, and without equivocation.

Finally, the gospel came in much assurance. The same original is used in Colossians 2:2, where Paul expresses the desire that the saints may "come to the full conviction which

understanding brings." It is used in Hebrews 6:11, where the writer longs "for every one of you to show the same eager concern until your hope is finally realized." It is used in Hebrews 10:22, "So let us make our approach in sincerity of heart, and full assurance of faith."

Putting these together, we see that assurance is a full conviction which stems from proper understanding; it is an eager concern which is prompted by the promise of God; and it is a firm conviction which derives from faith.

The opposite state is one of uncertainty and doubt. It is this which characterizes so much of the preaching in our day, and it leaves men frustrated, frightened and fearful. Thomas Carlyle said, "Tell me only of your certainties, I have doubts enough of my own." Peter Forsythe wrote, "Unless there is *within us* **that which is** *above us***, we shall soon yield to that which is** *about us***."**

A man without the assurance of faith is described by James as a restless wave, driven by the sea and tossed. And he is said to be unstable in all of his ways. Marcus Aurelius, who was born just about twenty-five years after John wrote the Revelation letter, said, "Man must be arched and buttressed from within, else the temple wavers to the dust."

I have always been intrigued by the story of George Fox, the founder of the Society of Friends, or Quakers, as we generally think of them. Because he opposed the religious establishment, he was repeatedly imprisoned on various trumped-up charges. Eventually, the soldiers of King Charles were sent to arrest him, and see if they could shake his faith and get him to recant. Nothing they could do caused him to flinch the least bit or to even weaken. In their report the soldiers said, "He is as stiff as a tree, and as pure as a bell." That is a good recommendation coming from the opposition.

In closing, let us summarize the ways in which the gospel

must come to be effective. It must come in words, selected and chosen and adapted to the capacity of those whom we seek to reach. It must come in power, demonstrated by our own changed and transformed lives. It must come in the Holy Spirit, the agent of God to transmit divine thought to the hearts of men. And it must come in full assurance or conviction of its origin, veracity or ultimate triumph.

The message must be presented plainly, it must be presented powerfully, it must be presented profoundly, and it must be presented positively. Jim Elliott, who was one of the five missionaries to die under the impact of Auca spears in the jungle, spent one summer before he left for Ecuador, preaching to Indians on a reservation. In a journal which he kept were found these words: "Glad to get the opportunity to preach the Gospel of the grace of our God to stoical, pagan Indians. I only hope that He will let me preach to those who have never heard the name of Jesus. What else is worth while in this life? I have heard of nothing better. 'Lord, send me.'"

Later that summer, he wrote: "He makes his ministers a flame of fire. Am I ignitable? God deliver me from the dread asbestos of 'other things.' Saturate me with the oil of the Spirit that I may be a flame. But flame is transient, often short-lived. Canst thou bear this, my soul— short life? In me there dwells the Spirit of the Great Short-Lived, whose zeal for God's house consumed Him. 'Make me Thy Fuel, Flame of God.'"

I should like to hope that this day each of us will make his prayer this simple and humble request. "Make me Thy Fuel, Flame of God."

Examples and Models

Contents

When Dwight L. Moody was at the height of his power, a reporter was sent to discover the secret of his success in winning men. He wrote: "I saw at once. Moody was simply bubbling over with the glory of his message. He reveled in it. His joy was contagious. Men leaped out of darkness into light and lived the Christian life from that hour."

I have often thought that I should like to speak sometime on "The Contagion of Joy." It was this which gave the Way its impetus when it was introduced into the sick and jaded world of the Roman Empire. Men were tired of the old religions with their imaginary and artificial gods. They were glutted even to the point of satiety with their own vice, and they were filled with despair and a sense of futility. When the Gospel came, it was introduced into a world where men were preoccupied with death, and suicide was glorified as hope.

No wonder men and women praised God when men came bearing the tidings of great joy. This was the very atmosphere which members of the Way breathed. The prophets of old, standing in the midst of stark desolation and destruction, had turned the telescope of God until they could look into the future, and had dared to predict that "with joy, the servants of God shall draw water from the wells of salvation." And anyone who lets his bucket down into the cool depths of the word spoken by Isaiah, for example, will haul it back up to find it brimming with joy, and lapping over the edges on others.

He speaks of the day when the deaf will be able to hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind would see out of darkness and obscurity, and he says, "The meek also shall increase their joy in the Lord, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel" (29:18, 19).

In a beautiful passage in which he describes the day when men would see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God, and which was written to strengthen the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees, he almost exhausts the vocabulary of praise. "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (35:1, 2, 10).

Comfort and redemption from God provide the motivation for rejoicing. "Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem, for the Lord hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem" (52:9). In talking about the power and effectiveness of the word of God, which waters thirsty souls like the rain and the snow, the prophet declares, "For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands" (55:12).

The new creation of God was to be one in which the former troubles were forgotten, and even the new wine in the cluster would be a blessing. Listen! "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold I create Jerusalem a rejoicing and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be heard no more in her, nor the voice of crying" (65:17-19).

But I must not spend all of my time with Isaiah, much as I like to visit with him. Any time I need an uplift in spirit, all I need to do is to put a sign on the door reading "Closed for today," and head for Isaiah's house. And when I have had a chat with him, I come away walking on air, and ready to take on the devil barehanded, and wrestle him all over the landscape. What I have read is just a little bit of what Isaiah said about joy, and he is just one of the prophets.

Jeremiah has always been called "the weeping prophet," but did you ever see anyone laughing and crying at the same time? When Jeremiah considers the sins of his people and their fate, he talks about rivers of tears. But when he thinks of God and his grace it is different. It was Jeremiah who said, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts" (15:16). He even talks about skipping for joy, and that means acting like a child who has just learned you are going to take her to a picnic.

Were the prophets correct? Did the coming of Jesus usher in a time of joy? It was distinctly said that he would substitute beauty for ashes, and the oil of joy for mourning? Did it happen that way? The night he was born the angel of the Lord appeared "to certain poor shepherds asleep in the field." And the angel almost scared the daylights out of them, even though it was night. But hear this. "And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." Great joy! The reconciling grace of God was launched on earth on a tidal wave of joy!

That joy remained unabated in the disciples of Jesus when he returned to heaven. "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." In the very next breath he adds, "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you." Jesus speaks about his joy and his commandment. And he talks

about our joy. His joy becomes our joy when we keep his commandment, and his commandment is that we love one another as he has loved us.

There are some chapters in the Bible which stress a certain theme until they seem to be a veritable exposition of one idea. We call Hebrews 11 "the faith chapter." We call 1 Corinthians 13 "the love chapter." We call Romans 5 "the much more chapter." Then there are some letters which are noteworthy for their key words. Hebrews is the "better" book. The word "better" occurs thirteen times in the thirteen chapters. James is outstanding for the usage of the word "perfect" and Ephesians for "together."

If I were asked to suggest the keyword for 1 Thessalonians it would be "joy." This is not the main emphasis. That is the coming of Christ. Every chapter closes with that theme. But the arteries of the letter throb and pulsate with joy. This is the pulse beat of the letter. Into this provincial city the coming of the gospel had brought joy which completely re-oriented the lives of all who had found Jesus. They received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit (1:6). They became the hope and crown and joy of the gospel proclaimers (2:19). The next verse makes the simple affirmation, "For ye are our glory and joy."

In an almost effusive and emotional statement, Paul says, "For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God?" (3:9). The core of the letter seems to be found in the two words, "Rejoice evermore." In the face of this we have a right to ask what has happened to the followers of the Way in our generation. What happened to the vitality, the effervescence, the bubbling joy of yesteryear?

Last year I attended a great convention in Texas. It was magnificently arranged by a large college, and there were

thousands present on the campus. The program was excellent and a printed copy in booklet form was presented to each registrant. On the cover of the booklet was a photographic shot of part of the audience the previous year. I've seen a lot of melancholy, gloomy and dejected faces in my lifetime. But I never saw a more somber or grumpier looking lot of folks in all of my life than were in that picture.

Down home where I was reared, about the worst catastrophe that could happen to a man was to have his favorite coon dog to get killed in an accident. They used to tell of a stranger who came through and ran over a dog lying in the road. The man who promoted him to "canine heaven" went to the nearby cabin, and asked the woman who came to the door wiping her hands on her apron, if her husband was at home. She replied, "No he's not. He is plowing on the back forty. Why?" 'Well," the stranger said, "there has been a rather distressing event occur. I just ran over his dog and killed it." The woman screamed and then started crying. When she composed herself until she could talk she said, "O my goodness, what will we do? My husband has been puny and ailing lately, and his heart is cutting up on him. Don't just tell him flat out his dog is dead, or it will kill him. Break it to him as gently as you can. Tell him first it was one of the children and work up to it gradually."

So when we saw anyone who had a long face, or was "down in the dumps," we always said, "He looks like someone just ran over his best dog." And that's the way these brethren looked at this convention, or lectureship, of Christians. They all looked as stern as one of our preachers on the first seat at a Baptist revival. There wasn't a smile in a carload. Joy and happiness had fled the scene. Sorrow and sadness had moved in to take over. I do not know how we will be able to attract many people if we always look like we are on the way to the death house, or have come down with a bad case of "intermittent uglies."

Epictetus was a Stoic philosopher who lived at the same

time as the apostles of our Lord. He was actually banished by the same emperor who also banished John to the island of Patmos. I want you to listen to a quote from his pen. "I cannot give credence to a philosopher who professes to have found the secret of high living, and the power to conquer evil, if he speaks without animation, in a hangdog fashion, with the face of a condemned man on the way to execution, and a moustache drooping in such a melancholy fashion that it seems to reach down to his knees. He does not look like a conqueror to me."

The attitude in which you accept the gospel will have a great deal to do with how you express it. Paul says to the Thessalonians, "The welcome you gave the message meant grave suffering for you, yet you rejoiced in the Holy Spirit." Perhaps this is one of our problems. No sacrifice is required, no suffering incurred, in accepting the message. Men who no longer must give their lives *for* Christ, are not too eager to give their lives *to* Christ.

This is an age in which we have "instantized" everything. We have instant coffee, instant tea, instant potatoes, and instant milk shakes. The chief selling point is "It's easy." We want instant salvation with no sacrifice or struggle. And sometimes we cannot appreciate its worth because we do not recognize its cost. The early Christians knew. Paul said, "I die daily!"

If, in spite of the sin, sickness, sadness and suffering, in this world, we move through it like sojourners and pilgrims, filled with joyful anticipation of reaching our home beyond, we will influence perceptibly those about us. Tertullian, who was a pagan philosopher, and who came to Christ, declared that he and most of the converts who came out of paganism, were not won by reading books or hearing sermons, but by seeing how Christians lived and died.

When Lord Chesterfield returned from a visit with Fenelon, the archbishop of Cambrai, he said, "If I had stayed

another day in his presence, I am afraid I would have become a Christian, his spirit was so pure, so attractive and beautiful." The power of a Christian life which exudes joy is illustrated in a statement by Peter who urges wives to respect the authority of their husbands, and says, "If there are any of them who disbelieve the Gospel they may be won over, without a word being said, by observing the chaste and reverent behavior of their wives."

When William Dean Howells visited Tolstoy, he wrote to a friend, "I can never again see life the way I saw it before I knew him." Joseph Twitchell spent an afternoon in the home of Horace Bushnell, who was rapidly nearing death. When Twitchell arrived home he wrote in his diary, "A I left the house, I felt a lively sense of things eternal, and a desire to live in them."

The story is told of a student, deeply troubled, who decided that he would take his question to the office of Phillips Brooks. When the interview was ending, it suddenly occurred to the caller that he had not even proposed his question, and had completely forgot his disturbing problem. But he said, "Never mind. What I needed was not the solution to a special problem but the contagion of a triumphant spirit."

I am glad to know that the Thessalonians received the Good News with joy. I am also thrilled that they followed the example of Paul, Silas, Timothy, and the Lord. We always do better when we have someone go ahead of us so we can follow his lead. The Greek word here used is one which appears in our trade name *mimeograph*. *Graph* is to write, and *mimeo* is to copy, or duplicate. That is what we are to do, reproduce in our lives a copy of the original.

Not long ago I heard a psychologist speaking, and he pointed out how essential it is for parents to set a proper example before their children even from the time of birth. It was

his theory that most children developed their habits by being "mimics" of their parents. Chimpanzees and other anthropoids try to mimic those who stop in front of their cages, so we speak of "aping" someone when we talk of mimicry.

The original term means to be imitators, and Paul points out to the Thessalonian saints that they well knew what kind of men the preachers were. He says, "That was the kind of men we were at Thessalonica, and it was for your sake." Just as parents need to be careful of their conduct before their children, so those who are fathers in the faith must be cautious about their behavior. Congregations of saints often reflect the traits and characteristics of those who helped to plant them, and sometimes example speaks much louder than words. Oliver Goldsmith wrote, "People seldom improve when they have no one but themselves to copy."

But there is another interesting thing about the Thessalonians. They not only became imitators of the proclaimers and Jesus, but they also became models for other believers. Paul says, "You were examples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia." The letter was written from Corinth, the chief city in Achaia, to Thessalonica, the chief city in Macedonia.

The word here rendered "examples" is the Greek *tupos*, our word type, and it literally meant a mould, a pattern or a model. When Greek sculptors, who were the most skilled of any in the world, were commissioned to create a piece of statuary, they first made a miniature replica in clay, so they could follow this model in scale. The word they employed is the word the writers use here.

And it reminds me of the man who listened in when his wife and another woman were talking about the merits of their husbands. The visiting woman was very critical of her husband, citing all of his faults and failings. But when it came time for the

hostess to speak, she simply said, "Well, I suppose that I married a model husband." As soon as the voluble visitor had departed the proud husband came in and said, "Honey, I want to thank you for complimenting me so highly." His wife asked, "What do you mean?" He said, "Well, you told that woman I was a model husband." His wife said, "Before you swell up and burst the buttons off your shirt, I'd suggest that you check the word 'model' in the dictionary." He did, and this is what he read: "Model. A small imitation of the real thing."

When we talk of type today we speak of that which leaves an impression of itself upon paper or some other substance. You can tell exactly how the type appears by looking at the impression. We speak, in the printing industry, of typeface, and what happens is that the face of the type is brought into direct contact with the paper and it leaves its distinct mark upon it. Thus it should be with us as Christians. In our face-to-face encounters with others in the world, we should leave upon them an unerasable impression. The world, by seeing them will see a reflection of our own faith.

That is exactly what happened in the case of the brethren in Thessalonica. Their influence radiated abroad and touched the lives of people whom they had never seen. This is a little bit amazing when contrasted with some of the explanations in our day, used as excuses to justify the insipid lives which we lead. Here were people under the influence of a profligate government, completely surrounded by a materialistic and militaristic influence, living in a cesspool of vice and violence, and subjected to all the pressures of a pagan culture with its constant demands for conformity to a skeptical philosophy.

Into this maelstrom of emotional hangups came an itinerant Jewish tentmaker to tell the story of one who spent thirty-three years of his life in a remote and despised province, and who was finally crucified under the accusation of his own people, at the hands of a company of Roman storm-troopers. But

the story got through to the hearts of callous heathen, and those hearts were strangely warmed. Looking beyond the unprepossessing appearance of the missionaries they saw the truth of the message.

Harassed and ridiculed by their friends, threatened by the law, deprived of their civil rights, and cut off of the national welfare program, they heard the call and they answered it. They surrendered themselves to the demands of a new Lord and resolved to walk in his steps regardless of the cost. They threw themselves into the service of Christ with utter abandon, not even counting their lives dear unto themselves.

An now comes a statement which thrills my very being every time I read it. The King James Version reads, "From you sounded out the word of the Lord." But I want to read from the New English Bible translation. "From Thessalonica the word of the Lord rang out; not in Macedonia and Achaia alone, but everywhere your faith in God has reached men's ears. No words of ours are needed, for they themselves spread the news of our visit to you and its effect."

We need to read this over and over and allow it to trickle down through the crevices of our hearts and water every fiber of our beings. Few of us in these days have any realistic conception of how the Message advanced and cut its way through the Roman world. We are conditioned to think of huge campaigns, vast crusades, tremendous promotion projects, and great advertising budgets. But the spread of the faith had no relation to any of these.

Nor was it circulated by well-trained preachers following a smoothly-flowing program with flawless timing and preceded by media publicity. The opposition had all of this. When the Way made its thrust into the Greek world it was face-to-face with pagan orators, scholastics and rhetoricians, who have never been equalled in any other generation. God had chosen the foolish

things to shame the wise. To shame what was strong he chose what the world counted weakness.

One of the first great opposers of the Way was Celsus. He hurled every conceivable kind of charge at the followers of Jesus, but he reached the depth of contempt when he affirmed that this execrable faith was not propagated or promulgated by thinking people and recognized men of wisdom. He charged that it was spread by sailors, leather-dressers, wool-combers and shoe-cobblers. His complaint was that salvation purporting to be from the skies was promoted by the scum of the earth. The Way had no professional pulpiteers such as the philosophical schools produced.

History bears out the validity of his criticisms and the truthfulness of his objections. A slave girl whispered the story of Jesus into the ears of a haughty mistress as she combed perfumed unguent into her tresses. A worker in a stinking tannery shared the message with a fellow-laborer as they scraped a dripping hide taken from the vat. A shopkeeper, squatting among his wares, told the prospective customer that God had visited the earth in the form of a Son. The tentmaker informed those who wove and stitched that the Word had been made flesh and brought his own tent with him.

Everywhere men traveled, the question was asked, "Have you heard the Good News?" It was the subject as travelers met in the inn, or traders met in the marketplace. The husband returned from work to tell his family as they dined. The visitors to the public bath discussed it while they reclined after their ablutions. Sailors discussed it on their ships, soldiers talked about it as they sat around the evening campfire.

Today we "sound in" the word instead of sounding it out. We pay men to rehearse in our ears what we should be speaking in the ears of others. We refuse to free those who have the ability to take the Word of life to the dying. We want them to spend

their time talking about life to the living, Jesus refused to spend his time with those who thought there was nothing wrong with them. He said, "They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." He went to publicans and sinners, instead of to Pharisees and the sanctimonious.

But we have reversed the order. We've created a nice country club in which the doctors prescribe only for the other doctors. And we know the prescription by heart. Even when one of the doctors changes the name of it, we can see through the ruse in three sentences, and we can recognize it as the same old tranquilizer, and go back to sleep. If we pay for preaching we want to hear it, and frequently we decide it is not worth what it is costing. We change doctors and start over, and often the new doctor is sicker than the patients.

What is the answer? It is simple. And it does not mean to fire the preacher, or drop out of the congregation— the only two alternatives recognized by the shallow-brained and empty-hearted. Don't fire the preacher, but free him! Free him to go where God intended for him to go in the first place— to the world. The gospel is for the world, not for the church. You cannot evangelize saved persons. We train a man to proclaim salvation and then make a congregational flunky out of him.

Preachers are expected to run around frantically refereeing little dog fights, soothing ruined feelings of half-converted hangers-on and camp-followers, and generally being organizational front-men for the projection of a community image, which we worship instead of God. They are saddled with more red-tape than a congressional committee, and are not allowed to be decent husbands and fathers because they are on call around the clock to listen to griping and pettifogging by those who are resolved to complain all the way to the gates of heaven— or wherever they are going. You've heard about the good old brother who had a stock answer for his friends who said, "After all, we are all going to the same place." "Yes," he

said, "and if we are not careful we will all get there."

But what will we do if we set the captives free— the captive preachers, that is? Start sounding out the word! Tell the Good News! Tell it to your children and grandchildren. Tell it to your neighbors and friends. Tell it to your clients and patients. Tell it to your chance acquaintances as well as your long-time associates. Create a pulpit out of your desk at the office, or out of your bench in the shop, or out of the wheel of your tractor.

Sound it out! Sound it out at home. Sound it out in the car pool on the way to work. Sound it out at the cafeteria table at noon. Sound it out in your neighbor's livingroom. There are no holy places since Jesus came, there are only holy people. There are no sanctuaries built by men. The only sanctuaries are created by God. He is not worshiped in temples made with hands, call them cathedrals, synagogues, churches, or what you will. He is worshiped in the inner vaults of hearts which praise him in everything, including mowing the lawn, washing the car, trimming the hedge, and eating pizza or hamburgers. If you cannot take Jesus into a pizza parlor or hamburger hut you had better stay outside with him.

The early saints did not send out missionaries— they were missionaries! Every Christian was a priest of God, every disciple was a minister. Until we recapture the ideal of the priesthood of all believers, and the ministry of all the saints, we are just nibbling around the edges of restoration. We will only be the new testament church when we start acting like the church of the new testament. In God's program there are no big "I's" and little "You's." Every person is important. We are not mere cogs in a wheel, we are all children in a family. We are not parts in a machine. We are members of a body.

The man who shows up in coveralls to fix the lights in the meetinghouse is ministering unto God. The young people who sing in a home for shut-ins are ministering unto God. The

woman who sits down and reads Bible stories to her children before she tucks them into bed is ministering unto God. The other day a man said to me, "Our minister took a bunch of brethren over and painted the house of a widowed sister." I said, "That's great, but your statement is backwards. You mean that our brother took a bunch of ministers over and painted the house of a widowed sister." Our speech betrays us!

In the last great day this is the ministry that will really count. Only once did Jesus paint a picture of the final judgment scene, with the Son of man in his glory and all of the nations before him, with the sheep on his right hand and the goats on the left. Jesus did not say to those on his right hand, "Welcome, you blessed of my Father, because you never missed a meeting in twenty years— or, you memorized the whole book of James— or, you argued Mormon missionaries to a standstill— or, you gave ten dollars every time they passed the plate."

The thing that will count is the way you related to the needs of others. "For when I was hungry, you gave me food; when thirsty, you gave me drink; when I was a stranger you took me into your home, when naked you clothed me; when I was ill you came to my help, when in prison you visited me." We've got God's program in reverse. Jesus said, "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." We come, not to minister, but to be ministered unto. We've got the cart before the horse, and we are backsliding while we think we are going forward.

Let's get with it! Let's sound out the word, in speech and in service. If we start serving we'll stop slipping. There is a difference between a brick of gold and a gold-brick. Paul did not tell us to walk worthy of our vacation but of our vocation. Let us restore happiness and joy to our lives. Once George V was asked to inscribe a message on the flyleaf of a Bible, and he wrote, "The secret of happiness is not to do what you like to do, but to learn to like what you have to do."

One of my wife's favorite columnists is Erma Bombeck, and now she has me reading after this clever and witty writer. I want to share with you, in closing, what she wrote under the heading, "Where is Joy?" It says what I would like to say far better than I could ever say it.

In church the other Sunday I was intent on a small child who was turning around and smiling at everyone. He wasn't gurgling, spitting, humming, kicking, tearing the hymnals or rummaging through his mother's handbag. He was just smiling.

Finally, his mother jerked him about and in a stage whisper that could be heard in a little theatre off Broadway said, "Stop that grinning! You're in church!" With that, she gave him a belt on his hindside and as the tears rolled down his cheeks added, "That's better," and returned to her prayers.

What must they think, these children of the 70's? We sing, "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord" while our faces reflect the sadness of one who has just buried a rich aunt who left everything to her pregnant hamster. We chant, "If I have not charity, I am become a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal." Translated in the parking lot it comes out, "And the same to you, fella!"

Suddenly I was angry. It occurred to me the entire world is in tears and if you're not, then you'd better get with it. I wanted to grab this child with the tear-stained face close to me and tell him about my God. The happy God. The smiling God. The God who had to have a sense of humor to have created the likes of us.

I wanted to tell him he is an understanding God. One who understands little children who pick their noses in church because they are bored. He understands the man in the parking lot who reads the comics while his wife is attending church. He even understands my shallow prayers that implore, "If you can't make me thin, then make my friends look fat."

I wanted to tell him I've taken a few lumps in my time for daring to smile at religion. By tradition, one wears faith with the solemnity of a mourner, the gravity of a mask of tragedy and the dedication of a Rotary badge. What a fool, I thought. Here was a woman sitting next to the only light left in our civilization . . . the only hope, our only miracle . . . our only promise of infinity. If he couldn't smile in church, where is there left to go?

The Real Revolutionary

Contents

On June 21, 1971, Jesus appeared— on the cover of *Time*. It was an attractive cover, making use of psychedelic colors, a design in mixed media by Stanislaw Zagorski. And above the head of Jesus was a halo, a rainbow bearing the words, "The Jesus Revolution." Inside the magazine twelve full pages were given over to the story. Six of them were devoted to pictures done in sharp focus and in living color.

It isn't that Jesus is *in* the news like Richard Nixon, Spiro Agnew, Moshe Dayan or Jimmie Hoffa. Jesus is the news. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the Good News that Jesus came, lived, died, and lives again. Even death, the great leveler, could not wipe him out. Men took him down from the cross, wrapped his immobile body in a winding-sheet, swathed his agonized countenance in a napkin, and the earth opened her mouth and swallowed him. But she could not digest him, or mix his elements with her cosmic atoms. Jesus arose. He came forth from the dead!

Now the editors of *Time* are "sharp cookies." They are not likely to be led down a false trail. You are not about to con Headley Donovan into turning over exactly one-seventh of his slick-paper magazine to one who is not news. And Richard Ostling, the New York-based religion reporter can scent where the action is like a blooded pointer can find birds huddled in a thicket. So it was that Jesus arrived on *Time*. He made the scene — in *Time*.

But this is only one of a number of publications which have publicized the greatest thing that is happening in our world. Actually *Time* was a little late! There was the special write-up in *Look* which stole a march on many others. You got your *Look* ahead of *Time*. Now *Look* was one of those would-be, blase, sophisticated, modernistic journals, whose editors flattered themselves that they could interpret life for the swingers in this pagan culture. But this time something happened.

They dispatched their team to southern California where several thousand young people had been immersed in the blue breakers of that ocean whose name means "peaceful." In their article there was none of the smart-aleck, tongue-in-cheek, double-entendre kind of writing which has characterized the columns in the past. The photographer turned his lens on young people who had fought the clawing drug monkey on their backs, who had sold their virtue and pawned their own flesh for the devil's juice to plunge into the screaming veins. Now, dripping wet, but cleansed and purged within, they were shouting and leaping, and praising God, like the poor cripple who confronted Peter and John at the temple gate called Beautiful, more than nineteen centuries ago.

The interviewer tried to trap some of them into admitting that it might be another fad or simply a new diversion, a plaything for the erratic and unstable. But it didn't work. The newly cleansed insisted that they had been born again from above and it was either Jesus or nothing. Their words were reminiscent of the long ago. "Where else can we go?" they asked, "He has the words of eternal life." And you know the outcome. The reporter and photographer, amazed at what they saw and heard, publicly confessed their faith that Jesus was the Messiah and the Son of God, and were baptized into his name.

One of the most astounding things that has happened is that Jesus captured a two-column spread on the front page of the organ of finance, The *Wall Street Journal*. The frantic bidders

on the Exchange who regard this daily sheet as their Bible, must have done a double-take when they read the lengthy report of how Jesus of Nazareth is once more moving into the hearts and minds of thousands in this age which has a difficult time deciding if it belongs to Aquarius, or to that modern Moloch, which devours statistics, the Computer.

Men who left their expensive apartments and rode the commuter trains into the noisy heart of a great city, read as they rode, but what some of them did not realize was that their own sons and daughters, who had fled from affluence, as if they were escaping from the plague, were even then reading the Bible in a distant commune, drinking the water of life in great gulps, eating the bread of life in huge chunks, to quench a burning thirst and stifle a gnawing hunger.

I know because it has been my privilege to be with them in several "Jesus People" communes. I can testify that they are searching the word of God with a fervor that should shame many of us who are older. In one place it was the practice to fast until 9:00 o'clock each morning, and to devote at least two hours to the study of the Book before feeding the physical man. And some of those who were doing this were from wealthy homes where they had everything at their command which money could buy.

I want to note with you some facts about the current "Jesus Revolution," as elicited by the reporters for *Time* in their research. They call it an extraordinary religious revolution, and here are a few descriptive terms which they apply to it. They refer to it as a startling development, and speak of uncommon morning freshness, a fire with a Pentecostal passion, a buoyant atmosphere of hope and love, and an extraordinary sense of joy. When New York religion reporters write this way, something is happening.

Since I am identified with the "straight world," I am

always being asked certain questions. There are generally two prominent ones. The first one is always, "Is it real?" The second one is, "Is it a fad, and will it soon pass away?" The reporters for *Time* answer the first question by saying, "There are signs that the movement is something quite a lot larger than a theological Hula-Hoop, something more lasting than a religious Woodstock." It is pointed out that it cuts across all social dividing lines, it already shows staying power, its appeal is ecumenical, and its own adherents believe that we are on the threshold of the greatest spiritual revival that the United States has ever experienced.

If I divide my own life into three eras of equal length, the last third is by far the most exciting. It isn't supposed to be that way, but it is! In the decade which began with 1950, it appeared that nothing could turn the young people on. They were apathetic, indifferent and unconcerned. When I went to a school to speak I would consult the administration to see what I might emphasize in order to help. Invariably I was informed, "Our greatest problem is the apathy of the students. They simply accept life as it is. They never question anything. They are not seeking any changes. They will not march for any cause. If you could kindle a little fire under them it would help us a great deal."

I never hear that anymore. I am now asked to fight the flames, not fan them. No high school principal calls an assembly these days and suggests that the kids build a little fire under the school. He is fortunate if they have not already burned his office, and especially the records containing their grades. New terms have arisen to describe students, words like militants and activists. The sluggish fifties were replaced by the slugging sixties.

Unfortunately, a lot of young people were like the man who ran out, jumped on his horse and rode off in all directions at once. Daniel Boone was asked upon one occasion if he had ever

been lost in the woods. He replied that he had never been lost but he was mighty bewildered for three days one time. I am not saying that all of the young people were lost, but a lot of them were mixed up. And a lot of them are honest enough to admit it because they are smart enough to know it.

They tried a lot of things seeking for some meaning to life. They introduced a drug culture, sniffing, drinking, injecting and ingesting chemicals. They deliberately sought to blow their minds to avoid minding the blows which the world deals out. And most people of my age condemned them as a crazy lot, a hell-bent, harum-scarum, no-good bunch, who couldn't be trusted as far as you could shoot a paper wad with a weak rubber band.

I confess that I never felt that way. Even when the psychedelic craze was at its peak, and minds were going into orbit with a riot of scintillating colors accompanied by soul-jarring, spine-tingling, muscle-twinging musical noises, I believed that an honest, but misplaced effort was being made to transcend the world with its pretense and its emptiness. And although I deplore escapism, even in the church, I clung to my personal view that the drive which prompted it all might be legitimate and could sometime channel into a worthier purpose. God can use man's mistakes to guide him toward a nobler path.

In the same way I regretted to see the confusion of sex with love, and of faith with mysticism and cultic philosophy. Yet I know that men must sometimes follow false gurus until they learn from bitter disillusionment that there is only One who never leads astray. And now we are in another decade and there is a great change. In the midst of a neo-pagan culture Jesus has moved into a lot of hearts and lives, and we've come full circle. Jesus of Nazareth is again being proclaimed as lord of life and hope of a new world. That is what it was all about then, and that is what it is all about now!

Why is it thus? The answer is simple. Jesus is the greatest revolutionary who ever set foot on earth, and he simply will not [step] down. Napoleon Bonaparte said to General Bertrand: "I know men; and I tell you that Jesus Christ is no mere man. Between him and every other person in the world there is no possible term of comparison. Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and I founded empires. But on what did we rest the creations of our genius? Upon force. Jesus Christ founded his empire upon love; and at this hour millions of men would die for him."

William Lyon Phelps, of Yale University wrote: "Jesus knew more about political economy than all the professors in all the colleges in the world, and he knew more about the human heart than Shakespeare. While I am not sure of many things, I am just as sure as that I stand here that Jesus is the greatest leader, the most absolutely right person the world has ever known."

Ernest Renan, the eminent French historian and philologist, who always seemed to have trouble with the divine Sonship of Jesus, was forced to admit: "Jesus was the greatest religious genius that ever lived. His beauty is eternal, and his reign will never end. Jesus is in every respect unique, and nothing can be compared with him."

What the world seems always to forget is that Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever. What happened when he was here among men, happens repeatedly. Men listen to him, wonder about him, laugh at him, make wisecracks about him, and reject him with disdain. The Pharisees and Sadducees seek to trap him with their theological questions because he will not line up with any sectarian establishment.

The Herodians set political snares to trip him up and make it appear that he is aligned with one party or another. Legalists curry his favor only to learn that man was not made for laws, but laws were made for men. The greedy try to use him to act as

administrators for earthly estates, and the schemers follow him for the loaves and fishes. When they cannot use him, they abuse him. When they cannot bend his will, they blindfold his eyes. And then they kill him!

We make a mistake if we conclude that men cannot crucify the Son of God afresh and put him to an open shame. But it always happens that Jesus bursts out of the tombs in which men place him. One day the announcement is sent out over radio and television that God is dead. Men look at the verbal stones that close the mouth of the sepulcher and wonder who will roll them away. Then, like a bolt out of the blue, Jesus has come back again, and the God is dead voices seem like faint whispers receding with the winds of time.

And now Jesus is once again moving into lives, capturing them, cleansing them, and channeling them into the Way. Pop-ups, drop-outs, teeny-boppers, bobby-soxers, long-hairs, short-hairs, bright-eyed, sad-eyed, screwballs, oddballs, agonistic and angelic— when Jesus zeroes in on them and zaps them, he disarms them and they flack out on the funeral procession and join the victory march! The harder they are the harder they fall. The tougher they come the softer their melted hearts become.

Pot-smokers, skin-poppers, vein-pushers, once high on everything from ''hash'' to ''horse,'' give it up. Like the madman who dwelt in the tombs, and ran around in the nude, violent, dangerous, and frightening, they are found sitting at the feet of Jesus clothed and in their right minds. Those who were strung out on dope now sing out for the Lord. When Jesus moves in on the promises, the demons vacate the premises. Only the one who hung upon the cross can effectively get rid of the hangups in your life. He knows you like your parents do not. He knows you better than you know yourself. He is the right way up for an uptight generation.

Jesus is the same— ***yesterday*****! Not** ***was*** **the same. There is**

no past tense to Jesus. He is the eternal I Am. Yesterdays are for human beings like ourselves. The earth has yesterdays, but heaven does not. What kind of revolutionary was Jesus in the world's yesterday? A revolutionary is one who changes the existing order. If he is an idealist he does not seek change merely for the sake of change. In such cases the changed state may be worse than the original.

Jesus knew that the only change worthy of sacrifice is the change that makes for the betterment of humanity. And that kind of change alters the world by transforming those who are in it. So Jesus came with no grandiose political scheme for social betterment, no research document with charts and graphs to present to the Roman Senate. He knew that the heart of all our problems was the heart itself.

Jesus said, "What comes out of the mouth has its origins in the heart; and that is what defiles the man. Wicked thoughts, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, perjury, slander— these all proceed from the heart." Unless men are changed from within they will never be changed at all. Sins of thought, word and deed, all of these are from the heart and in the heart. Painting the pump will not help if the water in the well is polluted and germ-laden.

Not long ago a prison reform official decided that the men under his custody might be given a sense of pride and dignity if they were issued a change of clothing as a substitute for the drab prison garb which stereotyped them. A few days later they stabbed and killed the very trusty who delivered the clothing. We seem never to learn that cleaning up the body does not necessarily purify the man. Mowing the lawn does not mean that those who dwell in the house are better people.

Sometimes I am asked if Jesus was a radical. One needs to be careful when he answers a question like that, because the motive of his querist might not be justifiable. But in the basic

meaning of the word Jesus was a radical, and he may have been the only genuine radical in the history of humanity. The word "radical" is from the Latin *radix*, a root. So a radical is one who gets to the root of things.

It is unfortunate that we have forgotten the true meaning and think of a radical only as one who uproots things. Often we equate the term with one who is flighty and filled with hare-brained schemes which have no real substance. In a radio address on October 26, 1939, Franklin D. Roosevelt defined a radical as a man with both feet firmly planted— in the air. Some of his detractors immediately declared that he ought to know.

Jesus was not that kind of radical. He knew that the root of all our trouble was sin, and until the heart is scrubbed out we will continue to make a pig-pen out of the world in which we live. Sin defiles man. It affects his thoughts, colors his language and blackens his deeds. It alienates him from God, separates him from his loved ones, and fragments his own personality. It warps his conscience, creates a feeling of guilt in his soul, and leaves him destitute and disturbed.

What was revolutionary about the approach of Jesus which makes him different from any other reformer in the long history of the world? He proposed to do what no other person could do, to rid man of sin with its corrupting influences, and to reconcile him unto God, whose name is holy. And this required not the proposal of a scheme, but the sacrifice of self. He must die that men might live.

Other revolutionaries had come riding out of the night at the head of dashing armies. Palaces were stormed and corpses left for the vultures to consume. Some of these, like wandering stars, flashed across the sky, and burned themselves out as a meteor divorced from its orbit. But always there were the ashes of yesterday and the despair of tomorrow. But Jesus did not come to show his power by tacking the bodies of his enemies on

gibbets and crosses. He submitted to those who hated him and allowed himself to be crucified.

The cross was about as far from an appearance of success as anything could be. No human being would dare arrange this kind of termination to a revolutionary movement. It looked as if the leader really got nowhere during his lifetime. He summoned a few fishermen, an outcast tax collector, a fanatical zealot, and a confirmed thief to be his followers. This little group of petulant social misfits spent much of their time quarreling over who would be the most prominent in the coming regime. And their master was able to live only because of the contributions of a small band of women. He had no certain resting place, no home of his own, no financial angel to underwrite the cost of victory.

He made no political impact. His nearest relatives thought that he was a little balmy, and the neighbors among whom he grew up tried to throw him from a precipice. At the time of his death, he was only thirty-three years of age, and despite the fact that he had never committed an evil deed, he had aroused such hostility that the people were willing to have a murderer and seditionist turned loose if only Jesus would be brutally killed.

Stumbling along under the weight of his cross, he had to he assisted by a stranger who had come to the city on an errand. Lifted up between two outcasts and professional thieves, he was made to die, unwept, unhonored, and unsung, except by his little band of discouraged followers. What a way for one to go out of the world which he had come to save. There is every reason to believe that his handful of poverty-stricken friends thought that it was all over, and another dream of glory was rudely smashed by the might of Rome.

The cross was a symbol of ignominy and a badge of shame. One who hung upon a tree was deemed to be under the curse of God. No greater disgrace could come to one than to have his naked body nailed to a cross, exposed in all the weakness of the

flesh, twisting, writhing, sweating, bleeding, and expiring in full view of the skeptical populace. And yet, there was something different this time.

The drama did not end with the cross. The final curtain did not descend at Calvary. On the third day, the one who died came forth from the grave, and thus proved that he was the Son of God, triumphant over death. And so the cross was not the end of hope but its beginning, not a sign of failure but of triumph. That is why the very symbolism of the cross has been changed in our day.

It is now a symbol of bravery and courage beyond the call of duty. When a soldier in almost any army of the world distinguishes himself for heroism, his reward is a cross pinned upon his tunic. The great agency which dispenses mercy in time of crisis and disaster is proudly known as the Red Cross. Insurance companies providing hospital facilities for their membership advertise the White Cross Plan.

Thus, in his death, Jesus was a revolutionary, turning loss into gain, and bringing life out of death. And all was accomplished by one powerful dynamic, the greatest in the universe, the dynamic of love. There are two great forces in our world, striving for mastery. One is based upon the philosophy that "might makes right." It is enforced by all the armaments of carnal warfare, by "reeking tube and iron shard," as the poet, Rudyard Kipling, describes it.

The other is based upon the principle that "right makes might." It is founded upon the nature and essence of God, for God is love. It is positive, not negative; it is creative, not destructive; it seeks only good and never evil. It loses itself that it might live. And it is the only revolutionary force in the whole world which can survive the clash of the centuries and the crash of cultures.

The world will never be transformed by a spirit of retaliation. "An eye for an eye" discipline, when carried to its ultimate, can only result in a world of half-blinded men and women. It is the "I for a You" attitude which Jesus demonstrated that will make the difference. Daniel A. Poling said, "Hate cannot destroy hate, but love can and does. Not the soft and negative thing that has carried the name and misrepresented the emotion, but love that suffers all things and is kind, love that suffers, love that bleeds and dies for a great cause— but to rise again."

One of Jimmy Doolittle's flyers, who was confined for many long and weary months in a Japanese prison camp, wrote about his captors: "They were ignorant and mean, but we thought there was some good in them. The only way to develop that goodness would be by understanding and education— not by brutally mistreating them as they were doing us. You can smile if you want to, but it made sense to me in that prison camp, and it still does. So I'm going to a missionary school for training, and then I'm going to return to Japan and spend the rest of my life there, teaching the importance of love among men."

In the July, 1971, issue of *The Reader's Digest*, **there appears an article under the title of "The Awesome Power of Human Love." It is the second appearance of the article in that magazine, as it was printed once before, in February 1963. The author is a scientist, Ashley Montagu. The article begins thus: "The study of love is something from which scientists long shied away. But with the increased interest in the origins of mental illness, more and more attention is being paid to the infancy and childhood of human beings. What investigation has revealed is that love is, beyond all cavil or question, the most important experience in the life of a human being."**

But I am more interested in the final paragraph, which says: "Scientists are today discovering that to live as if *live* **and** *love* **were one is an indispensable condition because this is the**

way of life which the innate nature of man demands. The idea is not new. What is new is that contemporary men should be rediscovering, by scientific means, the ancient truths of the Sermon on the Mount and the golden rule. For human beings— and for humanity— nothing could be more important."

That is why Jesus is the greatest revolutionary of all! His life on earth was predicted and justified by the ancient prophets, holy men of God who spoke as they were motivated to do so by the Holy Spirit. Now that life is validated by the discoveries of modern science in the days of nuclear fission. In the days of Isaiah men looked forward to his coming; in the days of Einstein men recognize him for what he was— the abiding Word made flesh.

The passing of the centuries do not dim or tarnish his figure, nor erode away the force of his personality. Truly, he is the same yesterday, today and forever. When the world's tomorrow becomes our today, and he sits upon his throne with every knee bowing in his presence, and every tongue confessing his glory, I will rejoice that I have heard the call of the trumpet and followed in his steps. He is my Lord and my God! Praise His name!

The Parable of Telstar

Moving Into the Twentieth Century

Contents

Recently, while reading the rather bulky volume, *The Waning of the Middle Ages*, by J. Huizinga, I came upon a statement in the preface which I want to share with you. "In history, as in nature, birth and death are equally balanced. The decay of overripe forms of civilization is as suggestive as the growth of new ones. And it occasionally happens that a period in which one had, hitherto, been looking for the coming to birth of new things, suddenly reveals itself as an epoch of fading and decay."

Whatever else this means, one things is evident. It is difficult for any man, caught up in the present, to assess how the age in which he lives relates to the past, or to predict what historians in the centuries to come will have to say about it. In our own lives, which we think we are living, we are actually dying, and each day that we live means that we have one day less to exist on the earth. If this seems a rather morbid vein in which to address a group of young people, I mention that I am striking this somber note, not to frighten you, but to remind myself of how fragile are our opinions as to the place we occupy in the history of humanity.

We live in the twentieth century, but this is of significance only to ourselves. It means nothing to the angels who had no calendars and carry no watches upon their celestial wrists. And it means something to us only because our feet are still planted upon the earth. When we exchange this realm of the unreal for

that which alone is ultimately real, it will mean nothing that we lived in this century, or in the Space Age. My father passed through the veil, and the curtains drew shut behind him, about thirty years ago, yet if I die tomorrow it will be to him as if we had hardly been separated. It is only to me that thirty years seem a long time since I looked upon the tent, out of which he had moved, lying peacefully in the box we had selected in which to store it away to await the time of its glorification.

So we never know whether we are truly fortunate to exist in one age more than in another. Man's genius for discovery makes it more pleasurable physically for him to live in each succeeding year, yet this may be a curse in disguise, for we may grow weaker and flabbier in both body and morals, as we become subjected to what the poet calls "luxury's vile contagion." The machines we invent may cease to become our slaves and become our masters. They may regulate our lives and control our actions, even our service for the Lord.

A good example of this was called to my attention recently. A preacher received a letter from a rural congregation asking if he would come and conduct a gospel meeting as it seemed the time was propitious for an in-gathering of souls. He wrote in his reply that he would like to postpone a decision until he could determine if the church building was air-conditioned. Fortunately, it was, so he could heed the call to go work in a cool vineyard, and gather in the sheaves in an air-conditioned field that was white to the harvest. But I would be a little reluctant to write like that for fear I would eventually end up in a place where air conditioning will never be introduced, and would only circulate hot air if it was installed.

It is constantly being called to our attention that we are living in a new era, that we are meeting new challenges, and that we must adjust our approach to the age in which we exist. Of course, this is true. Each succeeding generation has the benefit of the discoveries and inventions of all those which have preceded

it. We stand upon the shoulders of our ancestors, which is not the same as saying that we should trample them underfoot. Obviously we see things they did not see but this does not argue our superiority. A dwarf who stands upon the shoulders of a giant can see farther than the giant, but if it were not for the giant he would not be able to see over the garden wall. And it would be a very ignorant and ungrateful dwarf who would prod and criticize the giant who was supporting him.

In one sense we have a great many new things, but in another sense, nothing is new. The wisest monarch who ever sat upon an earthly throne said: "There is nothing new under the sun. Is there anything of which it is said, 'See, this is new'? It has been already, in the ages before us" (Ecclesiastes 1:9, 10). I know that a lot of people think this was the pessimistic grumbling of a king who tried everything and ended up as a disillusioned royal sourpuss.

I'll admit that Solomon had some grounds for losing his temper and his zest for life. Don't forget that he had a thousand wives, and anyone who knows how tired you can get shopping for shoes with one, can appreciate how you'd feel if you had to go to town with a thousand. You'd create your own private traffic jam. Imagine standing in line at a Jerusalem cafeteria waiting for them to clear the tables to seat you and your women-folk, much less the children who had cried to come along and visit the toy departments.

But not being a liberal theologian, and being under no scholastic obligation to explain away anything I do not fully grasp, I concur with Solomon. Much of what we call invention is mere adaptation of what has gone before. We simply arrange matter. We do not create it, and we cannot annihilate it. There is not a single new atom that has been created in the twentieth century, but some of them are now in new combinations they have never previously achieved.

A very erudite modern Jewish writer, Philip J. Kipust, says: "Although written almost three thousand years ago by King Solomon, the broad, sweeping statement, 'and there is nothing new under the sun' has more scientific attestation nowadays than it had then. Continued scientific investigation, inventions and discoveries, unwittingly seem to support and substantiate this hypothesis. In fact it may very well become an accepted scientific principle of the future."

To explain what I mean when I say that Solomon was right, let us take the camera and television for example. Actually these operate on the very same principle as the human eye. When you take home movies and project them, you are actually taking a rapid series of still shots and these are blended together in your viewing of them, so that you see "moving pictures." That is exactly the way the eye functions. You will see "magic eye" cameras advertised, but there is really no magic about them. Your own eyes are so constructed that the iris expands or contracts to make a proper adjustment for the available light, and you always view things in living color.

You have your own "zoom lens" which automatically adjusts to varying distances, and when both eyes are used simultaneously you achieve a three dimensional perspective. Actually, you have been a walking cinerama theater and did not realize it. Your eyes, acting as cameras, take the pictures which are transmitted to the brain, the control tower or operations center, through the optic nerves. There they are decoded and converted back to images.

And speaking about the eye, remember that the lens is convex, that is, it is the magnifying type, the very kind of lens necessary for the telescopes, microscopes and binoculars, which enhance our vision. You probably have windshield wipers and an automatic washer on your car. These are not really new. The eyelids and tear ducts have been carrying out the same function for years, and they do it noiselessly and constantly. Did you ever

have a squeaky eyelid? Did you ever have to replace one to get a clean swipe?

A jet plane is built like a whale and it cleaves the ocean of the upper air as the whale swims through water. The whale is really more flexible than the plane. No one ever saw a plane double its tail and rear flukes over its back, and if one ever does I don't want to be on it. Much as I fly I still like the ground under my feet. Brethren meet me and ask, "Did you have a good flight?" My answer is, "Any flight that I walk away from was a good one." I'm like the man who staggered off the little plane in which the pilot had been cutting a few capers, and said, "Thank God for terra firma, and the more *firma*, the less *terra*."

Now in the head of the plane there is a radar set which operates continuously in flight. It enables the plane to avoid collisions and also to go around areas of turbulence. But the same thing is true of the whale. The whale sends out a variety of sounds, some of which are ultrasonic. These "ping" against objects and resound, so the whale can avoid crashing into another whale. These ultrasonic "clicks" also make it possible to keep proper formation in the school, and to follow the teacher, as well as providing for navigation and location of food supply. It may sound a little "fishy" to you, but a lot of our modern inventions have been borrowed from whales, porpoises, and other denizens of the great deep.

And then, there is the bat. Scientists have known for years that bats have a sonar system which makes it possible for them to fly in darkness even better than some other birds do in the daylight. When a bat is in flight it keeps its mouth wide open and utters a continuous rhythm of sounds. These are pitched in a key so high that the human ear cannot pick them up. When these sounds strike an object the waves reverberate to the bat. His sensitive reception apparatus makes it possible for him to steer in the night.

In recent years biological researchists have learned that moths and butterflies send out radio waves, which can be intercepted by members of the same species, even at a great distance. The receiving mechanism on their heads are called antennae, and that is the very name given to the receiving rods upon the roof of your house. Some of these, like those of the moth, can be turned to any position. They are true directional finders.

We could multiply these examples a hundredfold, but this is enough to prove our point, that, in one sense, Solomon was correct. It also demonstrates the design and unity in all nature and argues for creation as opposed to chance. And the perceptive thinker will see how utterly dependent we are upon one another and how senseless it is for one generation to exhibit arrogance and pride. The young person who arrives at the mature age of sixteen and suddenly feels that he can be independent of his parents and regard them as a couple of "has-beens" is not showing true sophistication but his ignorance is hanging out.

But what we have said does not exhaust our subject by any means. In the spiritual realm there are some things which are abiding, steadfast and unchangeable. There are others which vary with time, place and circumstances. Unless we realize this we may destroy the very faith we seek to promote. There is a great difference between walking in the old paths and wallowing in the old ruts.

Some brethren think they are steadfastly holding up the faith of our fathers, when they are only stubbornly holding on to the traditions of their grandfathers. I think I owe Watchman Nee, the Chinese prisoner for his faith, my thanks for helping me to see that we do not bring life to the body of Christ but we only share in the life of the body. Life in the body of Christ comes from the same source as the life in my body. "As the body without the spirit is dead," is as truly spoken of the spiritual

body of the Son of God as of the physical bodies of the sons of men. My body lives because my spirit abides in it. The body of Christ lives because the Spirit of God dwells in it.

When the Spirit is not in the body the members cannot function. It is useless to castigate the members for inaction when the Spirit is not there. Giving a corpse a tongue-lashing will not change its state. You can berate the arms and legs of a dead man all day and they will not function, because they cannot. Many a preacher who thinks he is edifying the body is only mutilating a corpse. There is only one thing which will get such members to act and function, and that is for the Spirit to return.

And when the Spirit operates in and through the body, that body will find itself in varied circumstances and altered conditions. Each generation will have different problems to meet, and each must meet its problems in a way that is effective and meaningful. God has always adapted his requirements to the needs of men at a given time, and to their ability to meet them. In the same way we must be open and flexible in facing up to conditions surrounding us. We must not alter God's word to suit the mood of the times, but we must amend our methods to suit the needs of the times. If we do not, we will be storming forts that have long since been abandoned, and firing away at positions that have no defenders. We must be able to read the signs of the times.

The body of Christ is one, but it will not always manifest itself in the same way in different cultures. It is composed of members and these members are joined to a head. The members are individual men and women, and in any locality they must be drawn from those who reside in that region, unless you move a pre-fabricated, ready-cut church in from Texas, or somewhere. This is called an "exodus movement," probably, because those who go think they are escaping from bondage. But the body in Africa will not exhibit its relationship to God as it does in the United States of America.

It will not sing the same way, and its members may get up and clap their hands, and dance unto the Lord. Of course, one of the brethren from "the land of the free and the home of the brave," will soon stop them from doing that, and make it clear that this is not the way it is done in Oklahoma. Before long, with the proper training we will have all of the foot-stomping quelled and the brethren can sleep during the meeting like they do over here. I doubt that the African segment of the body will always pray like we do over here, and that could be a good thing. Some of our "prayer-cliches" are worn a little threadbare.

In the primitive communities of the saints the congregations varied from place to place. The disciples in Jerusalem were not like those in Greek cities. There were cultural differences, social differences, and national differences. In the kingdom of heaven we are redeemed saints and not rubber stamps. God is not rearing a family of "Tweedle-dums" and "Tweedle-dees." We are individuals and we are unique. We can no more all think alike than we can all look alike.

This means that the church in the twentieth century will not be like the one in the fifth century. We will not sing Gregorian chants, and we will not meet before dawn on the first day of the week. There was no Saturday night television in the fifth century. I do not want to frighten you, but we will not be like the saints in the first century either. I cannot remember being in a congregation where the brethren were all strung out over circumcision. Nor have I been in one where eating meats offered to idols was the number one topic in the young adult class. We haven't got time for little matters like that anyway. We are engaged in fighting over important and world-shaking issues like instrumental music, television programs and long hair.

We will be the same body that existed in the first century, or the fifth, or the tenth century, but the reason we will be is because the same Spirit dwells in us. There is only one Spirit, and he will not dwell in another body than that of our Lord. I

have been alive ever since I was born, much to the dismay and against the express wishes of a lot of my brethren, and the reason I have been is because my spirit stuck with me. But I do not look like I did when I was a baby. Really, I do not, for I am better looking now. My mother said that when the neighbors first called to look me over and size me up, they told her: "Cheer up! He is bound to get better. Anything that happens to him will be an improvement." They did not realize that they were prophets.

I do not talk, or act, or think like I once did. I have done a lot of kooky things in my life, and I have goofed off a lot. I'm ashamed of that now, but I am glad that God didn't call my spirit home, because if he had I would never have met you and been able to share with you. Not long ago some folks were visiting us and I got a picture taken of me when I was holding my first tent meeting. I think you call it a revival. I was twelve years old, thin as a rail, and wearing my best pair of knickers, or knee-length pants. The Bible under my arm must have weighed almost half as much as I did. I was advertised as "The Boy Preacher."

One of the visitors said, 'Who is that?" I said, "It's me!" "It can't be!" "Well it had better be, because it is, and if it isn't I am not who I think I am now!" I am the same individual I have always been, because I have had the same spirit all of the time. You don't need to worry about a spirit transplant. Yet there are evident changes in me. I think it is the same way with the body of Christ. It does not bother me that the church is not exactly like it was when I was a boy. It would bother me if it was.

The church was imperfect then in its human aspect, and it is imperfect now, although its imperfections may not be the same. As Will Rogers said: "We are all ignorant, but only about different things." The church has always been imperfect on the human side. It was in the days of the apostles. It is like the man who heaved a sigh, and said to his wife, "I'm not the man that I

used to be." "No," she replied, "and you never were."

The church is referred to as a temple constructed of living stones, but stone houses must be constructed of the rocks at hand. There is a vast difference between a house in Indiana built of Bedford limestone and one in the Missouri Ozarks constructed of native cobble-stone, yet both are stone houses. So the temple of God will vary from one area to another, but if the Spirit of the living God dwells in it, it will be holy unto the Lord.

This means that men who have been suited to God's purpose in one generation may be wholly unqualified and inadequate in a subsequent one. Certainly Martin Luther did a tremendous service in his day, but if he were here now and tacked his ninety-five theses on a church door, he would not be summoned before the Imperial Diet but would merely be arrested for vandalism and defacing of property. After the stirring debates held in Vatican II other challenges would probably only be laughed at.

If John Wesley were living today he would write hymns wholly unlike those he produced in his lifetime. It is possible that he would not even consider conducting lengthy frontier-type revivals in which sinners were whipped into a froth of frenzied emotionalism. Alexander Campbell would not write today as he did in editing *The Christian Baptist* **and** *Millennial Harbinger***. Perhaps he would not consider debating men from other backgrounds in an environment such as we now face. This would in no sense indicate cowardice or a tendency to compromise. It is simply good commonsense to know when tactics are no longer effective and to change to those which are.**

One of our problems is that we have difficulty forgetting that we are no longer a rural people. Our culture has now been urbanized. We still have our meetings at an hour originally determined by when the chores were done, and we hold revivals as we once did when the crops were laid by, or the corn was all

picked. In an earlier day in our history the church building was the social center. Here people came together to talk about events in the community and to hear the news.

In these days of mass media, this is no longer the case. Family life has broken down and crowds have become oppressive. They are something from which to flee, not something to seek. Ignoring this, we frequently schedule meetings which contribute to the further disintegration of the family circle, and we try to motivate people to drive through traffic to form a crowd in which we can bring group pressure to bear to convert a few sinners who attend. We often "go to church" so much that we haven't time to serve God. The result is that we call our meetings "services" in order to compensate.

Our service is not something we do inside a structure. It is directed toward the world of humanity. The real service does not begin on Sunday morning at 10:00 o'clock. It may well begin on Monday morning at 8:00 o'clock. God is as much concerned with how you act at home, on the highway, in the office or shop, as he is with how you behave in a church edifice. Everything you do as a Christian should be worship. All should be done to the glory of God. The true Christian will no more shout an obscenity at a road-hog who cuts in on his driving lane, than he would stand up in the meetinghouse and challenge the preacher to fight because he stepped on his toes.

It is not the church building or the highway that is holy. It is you! You are God's people. You constitute a holy nation. You are a royal priesthood. Many of us censure our good Roman Catholic neighbors for what we feel is their abject ignorance. We laugh behind their backs because they tip their hats to God when they pass the parish church structure, under the mistaken view that God dwells there. We get a kick out of it because we know that God does not dwell in a cathedral at all. We know that he lives in a building that is tagged "Church of Christ" on a neon Signboard.

But the Bible specifically says that God does not dwell in temples made with men's hands, despite the fact that we have spent millions of dollars in an attempt to prove the Bible is mistaken. We even begin our services by thanking the Father that we can assemble in "the house of God." But the house of God is people. It is composed of living stones. You do not "go to church." It is the church that does the going. If you were not the church before you left home, you'll not be when you get to where you are heading. Our problem is that we are acting as if Jesus never died. We are thinking of God as having an earthly temple as He appointed in the days of Solomon. And we are mistaken!

What is our responsibility in the twentieth century? How can we show that Jesus is alive? The answer is very simple. We must show it in our lives. Unless Jesus lives in us it will mean little to say that he dwells in heaven. He must not only be at the right hand of God, but like David I must be able to say, "He is at my right hand, that I shall not be moved." It is not enough to sing lustily on Sunday night, "My God is real," and then act on Monday as if the Holy Spirit had retired on Social Security.

Men are very critical of the institutional church in our day. They say that it has nothing to offer relevant to daily life which must be sweated out in the marketplace. Many of the members have no qualm about absenting themselves on the Lord's Day in order to join the restless mass. We've even had to revise the nursery rhymes, including the famous saga of Little Bo Peep.

Alas, the poor preacher has lost his sheep,

And don't know where to find them.

Leave them alone, and they'll come home,

Dragging their boats behind them.

In spite of all this there is one thing which still holds true.

Even the world acknowledges that Jesus has to be the answer. Few indeed will sneer at the man from Galilee. In the midst of the turbulence and strife on the ocean of time many would like to put their hand in the hand of the one who stilled the waters. This provides for us a tremendous opportunity. We can introduce men and women everywhere to Jesus.

This is the greatest thrill of my life, to testify to policemen, elevator operators, parking-lot attendants, check-out clerks, filling-station operators,— everyone— that it is well with my soul. I have deposited it with one who does not need to be protected with FDIC. He has the keys, even of death and Hades. In Jesus I'm safe evermore. Praise God!

The Parable of Telstar

The Fellowship of the Unashamed

Contents

The grace of God, which is my constant source of strength and joy, has opened up great doors and effectual for me the past few years. I have been allowed the privilege of testifying to my faith in Jesus before many groups. I have had the pleasure of speaking to Jewish and professional men about the credibility of the claims of Jesus the Messiah to be the one of whom the prophets spoke. I have conducted a spiritual renewal week upon the largest Air Force base in the United States and talked to the men and women who were present about Jesus as the captain of our salvation and the commander of our destiny.

It was my privilege at Harvard to present a speech dealing with "A Conservative Alternative to Ecumenicity." In one city I was allowed to speak at the noontime services in a central city theater where businessmen and officials daily came to lend their strength to the need for spiritual emphasis in our century. Upon three different occasions I have met with the members of communes of "Jesus People" and we have shared in meaningful discussion of our commitment to him in whom dwelt the fullness of the Godhood bodily.

But, of all the places I have been led to go, I rejoice in the Lord most of all, for the encounters which have come to pass upon the campuses of our state colleges and universities. Sometimes these have been arranged under the auspices of one group, and sometimes another, but in every case I have gone with a sense of exhilaration and joy. In gatherings assembled in

Student Union buildings, in dormitory lounges, in cafeterias and dining-rooms, or in fraternity houses, we have explored the relevancy of the Christian concept in our generation.

In such meetings, agnostics and skeptics, and even an occasional atheist, have questioned and probed, seeking to find the chinks in the armor and the cracks in the fortress wall. And in all of these meetings I have steadfastly insisted that I represent nothing except Jesus Christ and him crucified. It appears very important to me that I divorce myself wholly from a sectarian stance so that I am free to defend the faith once delivered unto the saints and not have to spend my time answering questions about some of the traditional hangups which are a part of every denominational complex in our land.

In most such meetings I use as my theme that the dynamic of the Christian faith is not static in our day, and I begin by pointing out that I come as a representative of no religious establishment, institution or organization, but am simply a member of the fellowship of the unashamed. I quote Romans 1:16, 17 as the foundation for my position. "For I am not ashamed of the Good News concerning Christ, for it is God's dynamic to save everyone who believes it, first the Jew and then the Greek. For in the Good News is revealed God's plan to justify those who believe, in order to motivate unto faith, for it was long ago written that the justified attain that status through faith."

Now I am ashamed of a lot of things. I am ashamed of some of the things I did when I was in high school. I am ashamed of some of the things that I thought, and some of the things I said. There are a lot of moments in my unworthy life that I would like to recall. Even since I started out to follow him who is everything to me, there have been incidents and occurrences which I am ashamed of every time that I recall them.

But I am not ashamed of the Good News about Jesus! I

praise the Lord that I belong to that grand company of saints, martyrs and heroes, who unashamedly witnessed of their conviction before kings and governors, in palaces and market-places, and who sometimes paid the price of death rather than recant. It thrills me to the depth of my being to know that I can be identified with this fellowship of the fearless and this company of the committed.

Jesus said, "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of the Father and with the holy angels" (Mark 8:38). I know that I am going to see Jesus. I have not the least doubt that I shall look him in the eye. And I don't want to stand there in the presence of the angelic host, with my eyes averted, and trying to dig my toe into the golden thoroughfare, unable to look up and see what is going on. To be ashamed of Jesus is to be ashamed of who he is and what he claims to be. To be ashamed of his words is to be ashamed of his message and testimony. I am happy to tell you that I have absolute confidence in who Jesus is and in what Jesus said.

Perhaps you have heard of Hugh Latimer, the Protestant martyr who was condemned as a heretic and burned at the stake by "Bloody Mary," queen of England in 1555. In a sermon before the royal court, he once said, "Latimer, Latimer, thou art going to speak before the high and mighty king, Henry VIII, who is able if he think fit, to take thy life away. Be careful what thou sayest, But Latimer, Latimer, remember also that thou art about to speak before the King of kings and Lord of heaven. Take heed that thou dost not displease him."

I am happy to tell you that Latimer never weakened in his faith. He was sentenced to die with his friend, Nicholas Ridley, and they were tied to adjoining stakes with the faggots heaped about their feet. As the fires were being kindled, Latimer turned to his fellow sufferer, and said: "Be of good comfort, Master

Ridley, and play the man; we shall this day light such a candle by God's grace in England as I trust shall never be put out."

It is this spirit which motivates me wherever I go and am called upon to speak. Certainly I do not want to be boorish or insulting to those who hear me. I must always remember that they are under the umbrella of God's love, and that Jesus died for them as well as for me. But, in the final analysis, it little matters what men may say about me, or do to me. Persecution may even bring a blessing. What does count is whether I am true to Jesus and his words. It was Woodrow Wilson who said: "I had rather be defeated in a cause that will ultimately triumph, than to triumph in a cause that will ultimately be defeated."

Long after skeptics are gone with the wind, and our tormentors have faded into the gray mists, Jesus will still be here. Julian the Apostate was so-called because he once espoused the cause of Christ and then fell away. He sought to drive Christianity from the earth by bringing back the pantheon of pagan deities. He was a master of satire, ridicule and invective. Sneeringly, he said to Agathon, a Christian: "Tell me, Agathon, what has become of the Carpenter of Nazareth? Is he still around? Has he any work at all these days, your Carpenter? Are there still some little jobs coming his way at least?" The Christian replied, "Yes, Julian, the Carpenter of Nazareth is busy, very busy, these days. He is nailing together a coffin for your empire." A few months later the emperor was gone. The Carpenter still lives. He is here today. He is building in my life. He is putting it all together.

I am not ashamed of any of the testimony about my Lord. First of all, I am not ashamed of the circumstances of his birth. I like for a professor to ask me in front of the student body, "Do you accept the idea of the virgin birth of Jesus?" It doesn't bug me one bit if he asks it as if he thought only a kook and a nitwit would say yes. I want to be able to say positively and definitely, that I accept it without reservation. I have no time for pussy-

footing, wire-walking, and compromising attitudes which cause one to sort out into neat little piles those portions of the divine testimony which can then be labeled, "To be believed," or "May be doubted."

Of course, I have it on my skeptical friends. They cannot deny the virgin birth. They are too late on the scene for that. To deny it they would have had to be present at the time to examine the alleged fact. All they can do now is to doubt the witnesses, or question the evidence. It stands to reason that those who were present when a thing is affirmed to have happened, should have a better idea as to what transpired, than a Johnny-Come-Lately, who shows up a couple of thousand years later.

But I am told that it could not have happened. And I ask, "Why not?" The reply is that it never happened that way before or since. So what? All that proves is that it was unique, that it was a "once-in-history" occurrence, and that is the very thing for which I contend. The reason it did not occur again is because the Word was made flesh to dwell among us only once. It is not a question of how many times a thing happened when it is the subject of testimony by witnesses. The question is whether it is a fact that it happened as they said it did. To argue that a thing could not happen at all because it did not happen repeatedly, is a wee bit silly. That would necessitate you denying anything the first time it happened. One has to study philosophy a long time to indulge in that kind of "logic."

Then the big gun is wheeled into position and aimed at me. I am informed that if my conviction is correct, a miracle would have had to happen, and there is no such thing as a miracle. Who says so? The professor. I ask him how he knows there cannot be a miracle. And it all boils down to the idea that from observation of the continuity, order and system of the universe, he has developed a presupposition that there can be no phenomena which cannot be accounted for by natural means.

Under this kind of rationalization, when one hears or reads of a miracle, the first thing he does, before examining it, is to brand the label false, and the second thing he does is to speculate as to what combination of natural forces combined to produce it. This is sheer prejudice, for that word means "to judge in advance," or, without examination of the evidence. When confronted with the miracle of the virgin birth the prejudiced mind assumes that there could have been no begettal by the Holy Spirit, and immediately begins to ask who might have impregnated Mary.

Even the skeptic has to account for Jesus. The day of the Gnostics who postulated that he was a mere phantom is gone forever. That there was a person called Jesus of Nazareth, who lived on the earth in the days of Claudius Caesar, is so well attested that to deny it would be to blot out most of the characters of history. The evidence concerning Jesus is superior to that which we have of any other person who lived in the days of the Roman Empire, modern philosophers cannot fail to face up to this fact. They assume that Joseph was his father but that gets them into a lot of hot water, and even a college professor has difficulty keeping his cool when in hot water.

Now I happen to be a great admirer of Luke. He was an educated Greek who wrote two treatises that are now a part of our new covenant scriptures. He was the only known non-Jew who contributed to the sacred canon. Luke was a physician, and undoubtedly of the Hippocratic school, one of the most highly developed scientific institutions of a day known for its breakthrough in many areas of discovery. Luke had a special reason for writing. Both of his books are addressed to Theophilus, the ruler of a Greek city-state, if we may judge from the specialized form of address, and the purpose was to give this high imperial official authentic knowledge about the matters of which he had been informed.

Listen to the introduction and salutation as given in *The*

Authentic Version, **by Hugh J. Schonfield. This is the only translation of the new covenant scriptures by a Jew. "Since it is the case that many have endeavored to draw up an account of those matters held by us to be fact, exactly as they transmitted them to us who were initially the eyewitnesses and bearers of the Message, I have thought fit myself, as I have carried out a thorough investigation of all the circumstances from their beginning, to set them down for you consecutively, Your Excellency Theophilus, that you may realize how well-founded are the things of which you have been informed."**

Notice that Luke says he had the testimony of eyewitnesses, that the information was exact in its transmission, and that the matters were held to be fact. That they were thus held by those who were so close to the time when the events occurred is very important. He declares that he personally carried out a thorough investigation of all the circumstances from their beginning. He recorded them for the specific purpose of showing how well-founded were the things which were believed. This is great, but there is more to come! Remember that Luke was a physician, so he writes like a medical doctor. He uses medical terms.

There is a difference. For instance, you tell people that you broke your shoulder blade, but the doctor says that you sustained a compound fracture of the clavicle. The doctor prescribes acetyl-salicylate for your headache, but it turns out to be aspirin. Now one of the words used by Luke is the Greek from which we get "autopsy." That means "seeing for oneself." 'When a doctor performs an autopsy he literally looks into things. That is what Luke affirms about the eyewitnesses. They dissected the evidence. The facts were established beyond denial.

Strangely enough, it is Luke, the physician, who deals at length with the virgin birth. There are three persons who must have been really concerned about the pregnancy of Mary. The first was Mary herself. You can imagine the problem of trying to explain to some of the nosy neighbor women in a provincial

village like Nazareth that you were with child by the Holy Spirit. I'd like to have listened to some of the gossip sessions in the houses in the next block.

The second person who would be deeply interested is the man to whom the girl was engaged. And Joseph was no exception to the rule. I would like to know some of the thoughts that whirled around in his mind and filled his heart while he was working in the shop. Espousal was as binding as marriage, since it represented a covenant or vow. And Joseph knew what the law said. The Bible says, "The birth of the Messiah came about in this way. His mother Mary had become betrothed to Joseph, but before they could be wed she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. Joseph her husband being a devout man, yet unwilling to disgrace her in public, wanted to divorce her quietly." An angel of the Lord set him straight on the matter, and he accepted Mary as his wife.

The third person who would be interested in such an event would be a doctor. Luke was no exception to the rule. He investigated it like a sleuth from the Internal Revenue Department. I am indebted to him for what he uncovered and documented. Apparently Mary was still alive and he must have talked with her personally. Some of the material he preserves for us could only have come from Mary herself. And here are a few things worthy of our consideration.

First off, Luke could not have been a forger. We can be certain of that because he does what no forger would ever dare do. When one wants to fake history he writes in broad generalizations. He paints a picture of gray distances without any close details. He is not specific about persons and places because these are too easily checked. But Luke goes out of his way, and falls over backward to date his narrative, and he does it by citing the names of rulers, governors and legates, who were in office simultaneously.

Luke's narrative begins with the first recorded appearance of an angel in four hundred years. Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to inform Mary that she was to be the mother of the Messiah. This was his second trip to earth in a little more than six months. Mary was told that she would conceive in her womb and have a son, and that the Lord God would give him the throne of his ancestor David, he would reign over the house of Jacob forever, and his sovereignty would be without end.

Mary asked, "How can this come about, since I am unwed?" The angel informed her that the Holy Spirit would pass over her and the power of the Most High would overshadow her. Mary consented with the simple words, "I am the Lord's maidservant. Let it be to me as you say." I believe that the ripened ovum in her own body was impregnated, not by human sperm, but by divine seed, prepared in such a manner that the eternal Word could become flesh.

If it were not so Jesus would not have been the Son of God in a unique way. I do not subscribe to the washed-out explanations which try to account for the coming of Jesus in a purely natural manner. There is no embarrassment for me to accept the fact of the virgin birth. The problem of the virgin birth is not the problem at all for those who profess to stumble at it. Their actual hangup is with reference to God and his power. If you worship the same God whom I revere you know that nothing is impossible for him.

I accept the fact that God is not limited to one way of bringing people into the world. Actually, human beings have entered this life by four different ways. The first came by creation, the second by organic transformation, and the rest by procreation, with one exception. He came by incarnation. And he was the Son of God. He was not just an excellent character, a great moral example, or a superb teacher. If that is all he was, he was really none of these.

It was C. S. Lewis who put the fire under those who piously say, "I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher. But I do not accept his claim to be God." Lewis wrote: "A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic— on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg— or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must take your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse."

We must realize that Jesus is always going to be a stumblingblock to some people. The Bible said he would be and if everyone accepted the testimony concerning him, without question, the Bible would be proven false. Peter writes: "To you therefore which believe, he is precious, but for those who do not believe, the very stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner, and a stone that will make men stumble, a rock that will make them fall, for they stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do" (1 Peter 2:7, 8).

Certainly, human wisdom which belongs to this passing age, will seek to controvert the divine revelation. And men who worship rationalization will be led to deny the facts related to Jesus. But I do not belong to the number of those who choke out the word. I belong to the fellowship of the unashamed and I am thrilled to tell you that I accept without question the most challenging truth of all ages, that the Word who was with God, and was God, became flesh and dwelt among us full of grace and truth.

I believe that no one has ever seen God, but the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, made him known. He is the power of God and the wisdom of God. He is the source of our life, having been made our wisdom, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption. I am not ashamed to acknowledge that he entered this world as the result of a miracle. I believe in the virgin birth.

And I believe in the resurrection of my Lord from the dead. I have no half-baked apologies to make about it. I deplore those who tippy-toe around in the pulpit, and talk out of both sides of their mouths about this event which validates the claims of Jesus to be divine. One who seeks to carry water on both shoulders on this important matter should either have one bucket knocked off or be made to spill them both.

"If Christ has not been raised then our preaching is in vain and your faith is also vain" (1 Corinthians 15:14). Do you know what this means? It means that regardless of what else I preach, how flowery my language or how moving my speech, it is a void and empty gesture if I deny the resurrection. It also means that regardless of what else you believe, or how orthodox you are about other matters, if you do not believe that Jesus rose from the dead, your faith is futile, and you are still in your sins.

I am constantly being confronted with those who tell me they accept the resurrection story, although they cannot accept the idea of the literal resurrection. They feel that it can be spiritualized. I trust that you will forgive me if I say this is sheer poppycock. In the first place there is no such thing as "the resurrection story," as they use the term. It is their idea that the disciples whipped up a narrative which seemed to them to make good sense as an approach to an interpretation of certain phenomena.

That is nonsense! The disciples were not trying to explain phenomena. They were telling what happened to them. When the front men for the national council of Judaism, consisting of rabbis, lawyers and religious dignitaries, put the political finger on Peter and John, and tried to clap a moratorium on their talk about the resurrection, those two said: "We cannot keep from telling what we have seen and heard." They did not drum up a tale to bring things into focus and make them sound plausible. They simply stated what they knew took place.

I'm always a little wary when people talk about "spiritualizing" something in the Bible. I know that generally this is a fancy term for cutting the heart out of a message. They want to phantomize rather than spiritualize, and leave you with about as much substance as a ghost. They are not so much concerned with a way of explaining truth, as they are with explaining truth away. Actually, if Jesus was not literally resurrected, he was not resurrected at all. If the one who went into the grave did not come forth there was no resurrection. That term is never applied to anything but the body. It is never used with reference to the spirit of man.

I do not go for the bit about the imagination of the tired and overwrought disciples conjuring up an image of Jesus until they thought they had seen him after his death. You must remember that some of the disciples were pragmatic fishermen, and none of them were wild dreamers or schemers. They knew Jesus and they laid their lives down rather than renounce their testimony. Jesus is alive right now. He has conquered death and the grave and he holds the key to both of them. One of these days he will unlock them and call from them all who are still within their confines. Then death and the unseen abode will be destroyed. I am going to be there for the occasion.

One need never be ashamed of his faith in Christ. Nothing can ever supplant the revelation of God in Christ Jesus. There is a graphic account extant of the meeting of Thomas Carlyle with Auguste Comté, the great French philosopher. Comté informed Carlyle that he was preparing to found a new religion which would sweep away Christianity and become a universal faith of mankind. Carlyle gave him this devastating reply: "Your idea is a splendid one. Now all that you need to do is to speak as never man spoke, to live as never man lived, to be crucified, rise again the third day, and get the world to believe that you are still alive. When you have done all this then your religion will have some chance of success."

I want to urge you to stand resolutely and with courage by the side of Jesus Christ. Do not let the world back you into a corner, close your mouth or silence your tongue. Have the bravery to live for Jesus and to tell others why you do so. If you one time take a firm stand for Jesus when others are mocking him, if you let it be known that you have placed your hand in the hand of the man from Galilee, you will not be ashamed or afraid again. And he will stand by you and the Holy Spirit will give you strength.

Stand up for Jesus! Stand up for him in the schoolroom. Stand up for him on the football gridiron or the baseball diamond. Stand up for him when you are with your best friend. Stand up for him when you are with the crowd. Right now make up your mind to join the fellowship of the unashamed and the company of the concerned. Jesus laid down his life for you. Will you take up your life for Jesus?

The Parable of Telstar

Walled In or Walled Out

Contents

I want to talk with you today about walls. You will note that I use the plural form, for there are many walls which men erect, and for many purposes. Some walls are justified, and even essential to the preservation of life. Others are monuments of distrust and hostility. They exist only to magnify and multiply the sorrows to which men are heirs. A wall can be a beautiful thing. It can also be a hideous thing. And the difference lies in the purpose for which it was constructed, the motivation which created it.

In 1951, my wife and I were in the Netherlands, and we traveled to see the four villages which had been built by Marshall Plan money furnished by the United States at the close of the second World War. When the Nazi armies knew that the tide of battle was turning against them and that they would have to evacuate the Lowland Countries, they deliberately blasted holes in the dikes and allowed the water from the sea to flood the polder land and the tidy villages which were in the area.

When we reached the country the dikes had been repaired and the villages restored. After visiting the schools we went to see the dike of which the Netherlanders were so rightfully proud. It was a magnificent piece of engineering, a bulwark of strength holding back the restless billows of the ocean. It was constantly assailed by a destructive alien force, which once had captured and covered the land. But day and night it guarded the lives of those behind it. And it was a veritable symbol of security and

safety.

Not too far away, in the land called Germany, with its once beautiful capital city called Berlin, it was different. I have never been there but I have talked with many who have been, and without an exception, all of them have mentioned the Berlin wall. Not one of them spoke commendatorily of it. They regard this pile of stones and concrete with its barbed wire entanglement as a wall of infamy, a badge of shame and disgrace.

To those who view it from the free world, that wall exists as a symbol of hatred and of "man's inhumanity to man," which, as the poet writes, "makes countless thousands mourn." What is the difference between these two barriers? Why is it that one speaks openly of life, while the other whispers darkly of death and despair? The answer is very simple. The wall in Holland stands steadfastly against a devastating force which would ruthlessly destroy all that is held dear by those who trust in it. The wall is a trusted friend, calming their fears, stilling their trepidation, and making for peaceful repose at night. It is no wonder that the dike is constantly patrolled and is ever being made stronger and more rugged.

The Berlin wall was not built to guard against a foreign force, but to sever and separate families, and to divide brothers who once mingled freely together as one. It is a wall stained with blood and often wet with tears. Even now, families appear at strategic points to wave at loved ones on the other side, and jerking sobs are heard as helpless folk turn back to their homes, longing for a closer view of dear ones whom they cannot touch.

These two walls have a spiritual connotation for us. God has called us out of the world to be his fruitful possession, exactly as the polder land has been called out from the depths of the Zuider Zee. He knows that the world will engulf and reclaim us for its own unless a protective wall guards us and the faith.

He constructed a dike to forbid mingling with the world and engaging in fellowship with its elements, and that dike needs to be kept always in a state of repair. We must make it ever stronger and thicker. We must guard against the smallest crack or the slightest sign of erosion.

I want to read to you what the Bible says about that wall. Listen! "Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership does righteousness have with lawlessness? And what fellowship does light have with darkness? And what agreement does Christ have with Belial? Or what part does a believer have with an unbeliever? And what agreement does a temple of God have with idols?"

The answer to each of these questions is one word. "None!" Righteousness can have no partnership with lawlessness— none! Light can have no fellowship with darkness— none! Christ has no agreement with Belial— none! A believer has no part with an unbeliever— none! A temple of God has no agreement with idols — none! So the divine requirement is abrupt and plain. "Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch the unclean and I will receive you. And I will be a Father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty."

The world of sin and wickedness is an alien realm. Isaiah wrote, "But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, says my God, to the wicked" (57:20, 21). If we are inundated by the iniquity of the world we will perish as certainly as did the antediluvians. Our task is to maintain the lines of demarcation between the temple of the living God and the idolatry of neo-paganism which threatens us upon every front.

But now comes the great tragedy. Men have quoted what God said about the lack of fellowship between light and darkness to fragment into parties and narrow sects the sons and

daughters of the Lord Almighty. They have concluded that a believer should have no part with another believer, and should even regard him as an unbeliever. Here we see Berlin walls bisecting the territory of God, holding brethren apart, and under guise of faithfulness to Jesus, splitting the family into warring tribes, eagerly fighting for the scalps of God's other children.

The wall around Holland is a noble wall. It is a necessary barrier. But suppose that the people of Holland were to construct other walls in their own land, and inside the dikes, and separate themselves into bitter political factions thirsting for gore? There could be but one result. The time required to build and reinforce their party walls would be taken from that required to strengthen the dikes, and eventually, as the political fences grew stronger, the dikes would grow weaker and crumble, and all would be destroyed.

This has been the cruel fate of Christendom. Those who have come under the protective shadow of the Son of God have been betrayed by Satan into erecting spite fences against other brethren. The kingdom of heaven is criss-crossed with a motley assortment of barricades erected to segregate the saints. Some of the most cruel and prolonged wars in history have been religious conflicts. Rivers of blood have been shed in the name of loyalty to Christ. And while this has been going on the world has engulfed the church and Satan has been the winner. The apostle knew this and wrote: "But if you bite and devour one another, be careful that you are not destroyed by one another."

Are you aware that Jesus came as the great wall-smasher of the ages? The eternal design of God is to bring all things in the universe into a unity in Christ Jesus. This includes things in heaven and things on earth. And Jesus began this great task while he was on earth. When he came the world of mankind was divided into two great segments— Jews and Greeks. The animosity between them was bitter and deep.

The Gentiles were regarded as unclean and unholy. They were not considered as a people, and were looked upon as dogs. They were afar off. They were strangers and foreigners, without hope and without God in the world. Between the Jews and Gentiles stood the law of commandments contained in ordinances, as a high wall, somber and awesome in its appearance. So long as it existed there would be two hostile and alien camps and never the twain would meet.

But it was God's will that they should be one body, one new man, reconciled to him and to one another. How was it to be achieved? Were the uncircumcised required to become circumcised and identify with the Jews? Were the circumcised to seek by artificial means to become uncircumcised and identify with the Gentiles? This would be the human solution to the predicament. Man could see no way out except for one to give up something and move over to share with the other.

But our ways are not the ways of God, and his thoughts are not our thoughts. Jesus did not concern himself at all with circumcision which meant so much to men. He knew that the reason they were divided and hating one another was because they were not reconciled to God. He made no demand that they try to become one by identifying with each other. He simply used the cross as a hammer and smashed down the wall which held them apart and they were together before they knew what had happened. The Biblical account is quite plain, almost to the point of being dramatic. In fact, the third chapter of the letter to the Ephesians is a sort of blow-by-blow account of the battering down of the wall.

First we learn of the magnetic power of the blood of Jesus. It has a gravitational pull which reached to the remotest bounds of humanity. It could and did affect the cast-offs and outcasts, as well as the close-bys and near-at-hands. Paul writes: "Your world was a world without hope and without God. But now in union with Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been

brought near through the shedding of Christ's blood." Jesus had promised that if he were lifted up he would draw all men unto himself, and all men includes those of every ethnic, social, cultural, and national group.

The apostle continues by pointing out that our ultimate peace is not a pact, a program, or a profession. It is a person. "For he is himself our peace." To accept Jesus is to accept peace. To be in him is to dwell in peace. And so, we read: "Gentiles and Jews, he has made both one, and in his own body of flesh and blood has broken down the enmity which stood like a dividing wall between them." Notice that the Jews and Gentiles did not become one on their own. They were made one. Their unity was the work of God, and not merely their own contrivance or arrangement.

Between them was enmity so great and powerful that it was like a dividing wall. On either side existed hostile parties, hating and being hated. And Jesus did not try to get them to make up, or to confer with a view to settling their differences. He arranged no delegate conference to iron out the problem. Instead, he simply died for all of them. He gave himself for them, in the most agonizing way known to man. And the blow-torch of divine love melted hearts that had been like stone. And when the wall was removed, broken down by death and washed away by blood, there they were sitting together, their hatred gone and their ire dissolved.

It was a little bit like it was when I was a lad in my parental home. We were very poor and there were six children in the family. We lived so far back in the hills that we hardly ever saw anyone but ourselves, unless someone got lost or was running from the sheriff. We had no toys except the crude ones that we made for ourselves, so our principal recreation was fighting with one another. Through regular practice we became as adept at it as later generations did at baseball and other sports. I think that I was born B. C.— before croquet!

But my parents did not favor us fighting. It aggravated them when we threw things at each other, especially rocks. They were afraid we'd rock one another to sleep, or worse yet, cripple one of the dogs. They believed in old-fashioned methods of discipline. They had not read books on child psychology, and did not realize that if you clobbered your offspring with a limb from the peach tree, or a hickory sprout, you would cause them to develop into neurotics, grow up with inhibitions, become bank-robbers, and blame it on their early training. They held to the creation idea and believed that God had especially padded a portion of the human anatomy, and cushioned the nerve-ends to provide a handy place for parents to apply stringent measures to the seat of the difficulty.

But they also used other methods of bringing home to us the wrong involved in fighting and snapping at one another like cats and dogs. Once in awhile one of us would be forced to retire to the kitchen and the other to remain in the living-room. This was not very effective because each one sat on his side of the wall and plotted revenge, and planned what he would do to the other as soon as the moratorium was lifted and they met on the shady side of the barn.

As I look back upon it from the peak of many years, I think the most effective, as well as the most humbling method was when they would summon my brother and me to come in before the judgment seat, and decree that we were to sit quietly facing each other only four feet apart, just out of reach. At first our rancor boiled up and expressed itself in frowns, but before long the humor of the situation began to manifest itself, we started giggling, and ended up laughing at our predicament. Nothing takes the fight out of you more quickly than to be forced to sit quietly looking your brother in the face.

God must have a real sense of humor or he would never have made a bunch of people like *us*. Moreover, he raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places. For years,

I have been thinking that the way our church buildings are constructed has contributed a lot to our alienation. The pews are in rows behind one another. Most people never go to the front of the auditorium. They plop down on the back row, and if someone beats them to it, they flounce into the next row, muttering under their breath about the audacity and impoliteness of people who hurry to get the back seats.

Most of them never see their brethren face to face. All they ever see is shirt collars, and the back of human heads. If they are inclined to be disturbed by the kind of hair which bankrupts barbers, they have an hour to sit and meditate over what the world is coming to, or whether it is "going to pot" in the full implication of the term. There is only so much thinking that you can do about human hair, as seen from the back, and you have the rest of the time to mull over the way the brethren act. Of course, you could listen to the sermon, but that would not be fair, as you would be encroaching on a preserve of the old folks.

It would seem, when trouble arises, that if we could get the opposing sides to sit down and face each other, and not argue, but pray silently for one another, it might do a lot toward relieving the tension. As long as they are on opposite sides of a wall suspicion exists. Each one is considering what the other is "up to," and when you start wondering that you always imagine the worst. On the other side of the walls things always seem dark and dire. You can talk to yourself about what other people are thinking about you until you conclude that they are reprobates, existing only to bring about your downfall.

We need to look at our unwritten creeds and conditions of fellowship as artificial walls we have constructed. Most of them stem from our trying to play God with other people's lives. We become convinced that something is worldly, or a sin, and we try to impose our deduction upon another who regards it as harmless, or at least in a neutral territory. Because it becomes an obsession with us, we think and talk about nothing else, and

reach the conclusion that those who do not concur with us are out of step with God. Before we realize it we have divided our brethren into warring camps over something that God did not think enough about to even mention.

We build the wall higher and make it thicker by insinuation and innuendo, by malicious gossip and incipient slander. Before long we have many convinced that certain brethren are apostates and deniers of the faith. There is a difference between denying the Lordship of Jesus and denying the right of other men to lord it over your life. We think that because we have no written creed we have not erected a wall, but an unwritten creed is generally more dangerous than a written one.

With an unwritten creed, you can switch signals as soon as you get out of the huddle, and one never knows for sure which way to run, or for that matter, which team he is on. It is like playing ball and making up the rules as you go along. Remember that whatever a man must believe, acknowledge, or subscribe to, to be in your fellowship, or to be regarded as your brother, is your creed. And every creed is a wall that includes certain brethren and excludes others.

We have all been pretty vociferous in affirming that our creed is Christ. But we have been long in declaiming and short in practice. If we truly mean what we say it resolves itself into an acceptance of men because they are in Christ Jesus, and only because of that. We will not make our opinions tests of fellowship, nor their opinions conditions of acceptance. The question will not be, "What do you think of this, or that?" Rather it will be, "What think you of the Christ? Whose Son is he?" My plea is that we allow the cross of Jesus to become more meaningful to us than any deduction, speculation, or interpretation. We can be one in Christ by simply removing our walls.

But now, with your kind indulgence, I want to speak of other barriers to our growth in this day. The early Christians were a mobile people. They were not chained to a place. They were not slaves to real estate. When persecution arose they had nothing to lose but their lives. They had been told by the Master that when they were assailed in one city they should flee to another. They could even take joyfully the spoiling of their goods for they were but strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

The first building erected as a church edifice was built about 280 A.D. in Nicomedia. There was a great deal of opposition to it. Some felt that it was patterning after paganism with its luxurious temples for the gods. They pointed out that the only temple of God on earth is the consecrated human heart. But the building program carried the day. At first, the structure was to be used simply as a gathering-place for the saints. It was not to be used as a place in which to preach the gospel.

Gradually, however, as time went on and there developed a clergy, as opposed to a laity, a distinction which has no place in the Christian concept, the structure began to be recognized as the special precinct of a special caste. The word pulpit, which means "a stage," was borrowed from the theater, and praise became something that was conducted, rather than the spontaneous overflow from the hearts of the saved ones. Eventually, still following the lead of the theater, special lighting effects were introduced, special dress was required as the proper costume for the actors, programs detailing the performance were printed, and worship gave way to a spectator performance.

It would be a little silly, I think, for one in the twentieth century to oppose a church building, or to contend there was anything wrong with one *per se*. But we do need to consider seriously whether such structures in which to preach the gospel may not have become detriments instead of real aids. And we need to examine why the most aggressive movements for taking Jesus to our decadent culture arise outside of our church

buildings and refuse to be confined to or by them.

The gospel is for the world, and Jesus told us to go into all the world and proclaim it to every creature. We have reversed the process now, and we invite the world to come to us. Our emphasis is not to lead men to Christ, but to "bring them to church." And we get a lot of them into "the church" whom we never get into Christ. We institutionalize them without inspiring them. We get their names on the record but their hearts are far from us. We must some day determine whether our task is to move unconverted men and women around for a 'body count," or truly lead them to the place where they count in the body.

Our problem is that we have transferred the war from the battlefield into the mess hall. And now we are no longer soldiers fighting for victory over Satan. We live in a sort of twilight zone of peaceful co-existence with the Devil. If he does not invade our territory we will not seriously assault his. If he does not bother our sheep we will not trouble his goats. If one of our preachers, under special temptation, "goes over the hill" with the church secretary we get on our high horse because the Devil will not play according to the rules. It isn't cricket for him to put the heat on a preacher. But we can live in a world swimming in moral sewage and garbage all around us, and salve our consciences because we invited them to our last two crusades, and they did not have enough ambition to come and get what we offered them.

What has happened is that we have been betrayed into walling ourselves in. We now live a kind of monastic life in which we regard the church building as a holy place. We have a special dedication service for our piles of brick and mortar, and then go to them regularly and perform a ritual. We preach to a world which is not there, and which often does not even know that we are there. Every time a new moral issue arises in the world we jump on a white charger and gallop around the premises for awhile, then dismount and hang up the saddle in

the old corral, and follow our regular routine until we learn from *Reader's Digest*, or *U. S. News and World Report*, that another dragon has been sighted.

We peer through the cracks in our ivy-covered walls and take an occasional potshot at a passing Mormon or Jehovah's Witness, with our theological pea-shooter, and sing "The Fight Is On." But a few minutes later we ought to remain standing following the benediction and sing "The Fight Is Off!" It is evident that when our brethren sing "Am I a Soldier of the Cross?" they are asking for information, and a lot of times the answer is "No!" Most of us are not soldiers. We do not know how to use the sword of the Spirit.

We have been trained to go where we can sit in comfort and watch a weekly "fencing exhibition." In such a performance one demonstrates his dexterity and footwork in fancy fashion, but never intends to puncture anyone. It is done for the interest and entertainment of the listening audience. Our motto has become: "Let's you and him fight." We have as our slogan: "There he is Lord, send him!"

Do you ask what I recommend under these circumstances? My suggestions are simple. First, we need to place our buildings in proper perspective. They must cease to be refrigerators in which to preserve and defend the truth. Truth needs no defense. It only needs to be turned loose. It is no tribute to us that we are frightened and fearful that in any direct encounter of truth with error, truth will be defeated and have to be carried from the field. Our problem is to rescue the truth from the church which seeks to make it captive on the ground that it is too weak to be turned loose on its own.

Second, we need to regard our buildings as filling stations. One does not drive to a filling station to take his vacation on the ramp. He does not go there for his entertainment or simply to be with the other filling station buffs. He goes to get his tank filled,

so he can get on the road. The trouble with us is that we keep filling up with regular, and we go on our way knocking and coughing as we go. We need to get filled up with high octane, anti-knock, non-corrosive fuel and step on the gas. Our brethren suffer from the weak trembles because they are afraid we will pass the world. I don't think we will even catch up with them!

Let us return from this place fully resolved that, come what may, we will carry the battle for Jesus Christ. On the campus, in the classroom, on the football gridiron, on the beach, on the street— wherever you are— let the world see that Jesus is in you and that you are in Jesus. The time for pussyfooting around is past. The time has come to act like men. Right on! We have nothing to fear. We are following a leader who will never know defeat. Tomorrow will be ours if we do not falter!

The Parable of Telstar

Space Age Religion

Contents

From a great many sources in these days one hears that the religion set forth in the new covenant scriptures is not adequate for the space age. It is pointed out that Jesus lived at a time when the problems of life were relatively simple. His was a provincial life within the confines of the little country called Palestine. We know of but one occasion when he stepped across the border of the Jewish commonwealth into the region of Tyre and Sidon. The communications of the day were slow and the means of travel very limited. It is reasoned that any system which would be adapted to that day could not possibly serve the requirements of these times.

We think that such reasoning overlooks certain truths which render it invalid. One of the most important of these is that human nature has not changed. It is true that men can transmit thought from one part of the globe to another more rapidly than centuries ago but it remains that what is transmitted is still human thought and much of it is not worth the cost and effort of transmission. Men can travel through space more readily and with greater ease but they are the same kind of men. There is no indication that men who ride in jet-propelled planes are any better morally or spiritually than those who walked or rode on asses or camels.

Religion is not primarily concerned with the nature of man's travel but with the nature of the man who does the traveling. Since there is no indication that man has altered too

greatly in this sphere it remains that the religious provision which met his basic needs in days past is adequate to do so now. I happen to be among those who believe that man is not the mere product of a fortuitous concourse of atoms. That is simply a sophisticated expression for something that just happened or is the result of mere chance. I believe man was created by an intelligent being and that this accounts for the fact that man himself is such a being.

It seems like good common sense, or perhaps for these days, uncommon good sense, that the man who makes an automobile "from the ground up" ought to know more about it than anyone else. By the same token, I consider that the creator who made man "up from the ground" ought to know more about his need than anyone else, including man himself. I have not the least doubt that God could provide for the physical and spiritual needs of man for all time. Man needs bread and God provided the grain from which it is made. He needs water and copious streams gush from the hillsides. "Man does not live by bread alone" and God has provided the bread of life and the water of life.

Man no more outgrows his need for one bread than for the other. True he may improve upon the method of preparation and transportation of the bread, but he still needs bread. So we can improve upon our method of translation, interpretation and explanation, but we still need the bread of life. During the second world war when raw materials were in such short supply in Germany, the Nazi regime experimented with *ersatz* products. A certain percentage of sawdust was mixed in both the sausage and the bread and the people soon suffered from malnutrition. One of our difficulties in these days comes from modern speculation about the basic needs of man. We have too many sawdust sermons. That will explain why they are so dry. Here are some things that do not change. They will explain why we do not need another religion than that of Jesus Christ.

(1). The nature of sin has not changed. When you read the catalog of sins detailed in the first chapter of Romans it sounds just like the police blotter in one of our large cities. The prophets who portray the conduct of ancient nations write like the crime reporters of a metropolitan daily. Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel are our contemporaries in their depiction of the guilt of the people. Not one of our problems is truly modern. Drunkenness is at least as old as Noah. Murder goes back as far as Cain. The eternal triangle with its emphasis upon sex reaches not only into the parliaments of today but reared its ugly head in the palace of King David.

Juvenile delinquency is no new thing upon the earth. Listen to this statement: "The children now love luxury; they have bad manners, contempt for authority; they show disrespect for elders and love chatter in the place of exercise. They no longer rise when elders enter the room. They contradict their parents, chatter before company, gobble up dainties at the table, cross their legs and tyrannize over their teachers." No, that is not a quotation from the latest issue of *Time* **or** *Readers Digest***. It is from Socrates and it was written 2,500 years ago.**

In 4,000 B.C., which was about fifteen hundred years before Socrates, a discouraged Egyptian priest penned these words: "Our earth is degenerated in these latter days. There are signs that the world is coming to an end. Children no longer obey their parents. Everybody wants to write a book. The end of the world is near."

(2). The penalty for sin has not changed. "For the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). It is true that the penalty is not exactly physically and immediately as it was under the old covenant when "a man who violated the law of Moses died without mercy at the testimony of two or three witnesses" (Heb. 10:28). But we must not forget that the first covenant was both political and religious in its nature. It operated in the spiritual and civil realms through earthly courts of jurisprudence. The method of

enforcement or enactment of the penalty has changed, but the penalty itself is inevitable. "For those who are factious and do not obey the truth, but obey wickedness, there will be wrath and fury" (Romans 2:8). "The Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance upon those who do not know God and upon those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus" (2 Thess. 1:7, 8).

(3). The helplessness of man has not changed. He has repeatedly demonstrated his lack of ability to overcome sin by his own wisdom. After the industrial revolution and the introduction of technology, many thinkers predicted the coming of a golden age to the earth. It was widely proclaimed that all of the problems of crime and poverty would be solved and the earth would become a veritable paradise. The promises of future glory were ridiculed as "pie in the sky." But the savagery and ruthlessness of two great world conflicts coupled with a depression and panic on the stock markets revealed how foolish were the prophets of plenty and prosperity.

Man has not outgrown his need of religion and the revelation from heaven is as important now as it has ever been. It adequately provides for the needs of man and it is the only thing which does. Man is able to project himself into three time sequences. By the faculty of memory he can live in the past and by the use of foresight or perception he can live in the future, even as he lives in the present in actuality. Since man is a rational and, therefore, a responsible being, he can suffer remorse for his past deeds and fear of the future because of the punishment it may bring.

When man faces the past with a sense of guilt and the future with a sense of dread because of the past, the present can become a constant torture, and he may actually crack under the strain. He is caught between the tension created by the past and future and is pressed as if by two great weights. That is why such a person is spoken of as being "depressed." No one can

function normally or happily in such a state. It is obvious that man must be freed and liberated in all three dimensions of time if he is to fulfill his purpose on earth. It is our conviction that a faith adequate to the needs of modern man must provide five things.

1. FREEDOM FROM SIN

No man can ever undo an act which he has committed. Since all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, and since all sin is an offence against the majesty of heaven, a religion calculated to suit man's need must be one which provides for forgiveness of sin and restoration of the state of union with the Father. Man must be freed from the guilt, contamination, dominion and consequence of his sin, else he can know no happiness in this life.

The religion set forth in the new covenant scriptures does all of this. In the first place, forgiveness is accorded by the only one capable of truly granting it, God himself. "And be kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you." (Eph. 4:32). Moreover, there is a distinct promise that such sins will no longer be remembered by God. "For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more" (Heb. 8:12). In Colossians 2:13, God is spoken of as "having forgiven us all our trespasses."

In addition, the Christian system promises us justification. This is very important to our peace of mind and we need to understand it. In the legal usage of the word no one can be justified except the man who is absolutely innocent and free of guilt. Upon such a basis none of us can ever be justified because all of us are guilty before God. In the scriptural sense God treats those who fully trust in Jesus as if they were innocent. Our justification is by divine decree through grace. "It is God who justifies" (Rom. 8:33). He simply pardons our sins when we come

into Christ and regards us as if we had never sinned. "They are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:24).

This makes possible a reconciliation. The broken ties are restored, the gulf is bridged, the breach is repaired. The apostle says that "while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son" (Rom. 5:10). Again he says, "All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself" (2 Cor. 5:18). This is not all. Let us suppose that a man who has slaves in his possession calls them all to assemble for an important announcement and when they do, he informs them that they are granted their liberty or freedom. Surely this would be an hour of destiny in their lives. But suppose that he then informs them that he is adopting all of them into his family so they may wear his name, eat at his table, and share in the inheritance with his firstborn son who from henceforth will be recognized as their elder brother.

That is exactly what God has done for us. "So through God you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son then an heir" (Gal. 4:7). The human personality is thus freed from guilt and remorse for sins of the past and we can be certain that these will be remembered no more.

2. A PURPOSE IN LIFE

Man cannot live happily and live a purposeless existence. He must be dedicated to a cause outside of and greater than himself which will provide an outlet for his energies and thoughts. He must have something worth dying for or he will have nothing worth living for. Much of the prevalence of nervous disorders and mental breakdowns in our day is traceable to the fact that many have no real goal in life. They have had as an aim the attainment to security only on a selfish and material level and now that "they have it made" it unmakes

them.

We have become imbued with the thought of retiring when actually there can be no such thing. Thus many who retire simply die ahead of time and do not realize it. They are like professional mountain-climbers who have no peaks left to challenge them and the only thing left is to bask in the reflected glories of the past. The human spirit does not retire when one bids farewell to his job. It is for this reason that some say of men who have retired that "they flop about as a chicken with its head cut off." It is obvious that such a fowl is not going anywhere and will accomplish nothing in spite of its actions.

Christianity furnishes us an objective *for life*, and that statement can be taken in two ways— as to goal and time! It gives us a reason for living and does so as long as we live. Paul said, "It is my eager expectation and hope that I shall not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or death" (Phil. 1:20). Contrast this vital, energizing statement with the attitude of a lot of older folk who sit around bemoaning their fate and feeling sorry for themselves. A lot of those who think they are in the way just need to be in The Way! It will make a lot of difference. Here are a few things that true faith will enable you to do.

Become a junior partner in the firm of God and Company, Unlimited, in the saving of the world.

Share the knowledge you have gained through study and experience with others who are in the learning process.

Enrich the lives of others by a genuine example of the faith which conquers difficulties and accepts, without whimpering and complaining, those things which cannot be avoided.

3. A SENSE OF BELONGING

Man is a gregarious creature. That means he is inclined to *"flock"* with others of his kind. He is not adapted to a lone wolf existence but is a social being. It is essential to man's welfare that he belong to the group. This tendency to want to belong is the real reason for many fraternities and associations. It is also the divine reason for creating a fellowship in which the saints may function and assist each other.

The idea that one can be just as good a Christian out of the fellowship as in it is foreign to the whole spiritual concept. Edification is a mutual process. One does not grow or mature alone but in company with others. The expression "one another" is used often in the scriptures. It is from a word meaning "mutual or reciprocal." Every person is important to Christ and must be important to every other person in Christ.

So closely knit together are those in Christ Jesus that they actually constitute a body. So interwoven are their interests that they are truly "members one of another." "For as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another" (Romans 12:5).

Just as there is no useless member of the physical body so there is no useless appendage to the spiritual body. Every member is important. All contribute something valuable. "To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good" (1 Cor. 12:7). One member cannot tell another that he is not needed. "On the contrary, the parts of the body which seem to be weaker are indispensable" (1 Cor. 12:22). The members are to have the same care one for another.

Every person to be healthy emotionally must feel that he is wanted and that he is loved for his own sake. In the body of Christ one is loved not because he is likeable but because he is loved of God. His worth is determined not by what he has but by who has him. It is not reckoned by what he can do for God but

by what God has done for him. It is the cross which sets our value. If Jesus loved us enough to die for us we ought to love each other enough to live for him and for each other.

The church of God is the greatest fraternity on earth. It bases brotherhood on a common fatherhood and fellowship upon divine sonship. We are blood brothers because we have been purchased with his blood. We belong together because together we belong to Him. Here there are no national, legal, social, racial or other lines. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female, but all are one in him" because he is all in all. No one need to feel left out who has been brought in. We are citizens of the same kingdom, children of the same family, and sons of the same father. Our need for social recognition is met abundantly in the circle of his love.

4. NO FEAR OF DEATH

Freedom from the guilt attached to our misdeeds of the past takes care of our previous existence and its futility. The consciousness of having a challenging purpose in life and the sense of belonging make it possible for us to place a proper value on the present, but something more is needed. To be emotionally stable one has to have assurance that his dreams will not be forever shattered by death nor the results of his creativity suddenly end or be abruptly terminated by his decease.

Death is real. It cannot be evaded or avoided. It has to be faced regardless of our reluctance. There are many who cannot bring themselves to face its reality. When a loved one dies they tint and paint the corpse and talk about how natural he looks. They frequently say that he looks almost as if he were ready to speak. Beautiful little poems are read to the effect that, "He is not dead, he is just away!" But the word of God plainly says that "the body without the spirit is dead." When Jesus spoke of Lazarus as having fallen asleep his disciples misunderstood his

meaning. "Then Jesus told them plainly, 'Lazarus is dead:'" He removed any doubt.

Fear of death may stem from a great many factors. There may be the dread of the last struggle in which the spirit wrenches itself from the tabernacle of clay, or a recoil from the dissolution and decomposition of the flesh in the narrow confines of a cold and dark sepulcher. However, it is our view that death creates dread especially because it ends one's personal participation in his plan for life. In the Saint Louis Art Museum is a piece of statuary entitled, "The Angel of Death and the Sculptor." It depicts a sculptor with hammer upraised to strike the chisel with which he is carving a beautiful figure. But the Angel of Death has just laid a hand upon his shoulder to summon him from his unfinished task. The look of incredulity and unbelief upon the face of the sculptor is almost indescribable.

Nothing is more clearly taught in the Bible than the fact that Jesus came "to deliver those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Death is not the end. It does not swallow up all that is precious but it is destined to be swallowed up. "When the perishable puts on the imperishable and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written— Death is swallowed up in victory." We are not accustomed to thinking of death and victory in the same breath but this is the effect of Christianity.

A Christian does not suffer loss but makes a gain in death. He does not leave home, he goes home. He does not end it all but all that is precious begins. It was the cheerfulness of the primitive Christians in the face of death which so amazed the Pagans. The futile fatalism of the heathen was in marked contrast to the fervent faithfulness of those in Christ. It was expressed in the words of the apostle, "That you sorrow not as others which have no hope."

Nowhere is the difference between the attitude of the believer and that of the unbeliever toward death more apparent than in the inscriptions upon the graves discovered in the catacombs, the underground galleries which served as cemeteries for ancient Rome. Jews and Pagans as well as Christians used the catacombs as a burial place. The epitaphs reveal the philosophy of the dead. Out of the scores which have been translated we select this typical one from a Pagan sepulcher. "Fortune makes many promises but keeps none of them; live then for the present day and hour, since nothing else is really ours." Contrast this with an inscription from a Christian sepulcher in which the name and age of the deceased have worn away and become undecipherable. "Blessed be the name of the Lord who gave and has taken away . . . lived . . . years, and ended his life in peace."

When Cyprian wrote concerning the Christians who died in the pestilence which raged during the reigns of Gallus and Valerian (A.D. 251-260) he said, "How often and how manifestly has it been revealed to me by the condescension of God, that I should publicly declare that our brethren who are escaped from this world by the Lord's summons are not to be lamented, since we know they are not lost but gone before. Though they are to be longed for, they are not to be bewailed; and it is not becoming for us to put on black garments for them here, when they are already clothed in white raiment there."

5. AN ETERNAL HOPE

Man, without hope, is like a person in a boat on a dark night, drifting with the current, but without light, chart or compass. Such a person, unable to pierce the gloom must only cower in constant dread of what may occur each minute. He listens for the crunch of his vessel against a rock looming up out of the void, or anticipates going over a precipice to be dashed to pieces in a whirlpool below. And all of the time he is being

carried relentlessly onward, unable to stop or to deter his progress toward destiny.

No doubt it is for this reason that the writer of the letter to the Hebrews speaks of God's promise and of the oath with which he binds himself to fulfill it. It is impossible for God to lie and he needed no oath to validate his promise. But men were accustomed to take an oath for confirmation and such an oath became final in attesting to any fact. Thus, for our sakes, God adapted himself to human methods to give us no ground for doubt. "So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he interposed with an oath" (Heb. 6:17) .

Thus we have two real grounds for trust, the promise of God and the oath of God. In both of these God must be unvarying and unchangeable since his nature is at stake. "So that through two unchangeable things in which it is impossible that God should prove false, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to seize the hope set before us." The reference here is no doubt to the cities of refuge described in the old covenant scriptures.

When the children of Israel drove out the Canaanites and possessed their land, a division of territory was made on the basis of tribal lots. The tribe of Levi, constituting the priesthood, received no allotment of land. Instead they were given forty-eight cities. Six of these, three on either side of the Jordan, were designated as cities of refuge. If one accidentally killed a fellow-workman he could flee to one of these cities and be assured of protection against the pursuing avenger of blood. Here he found succor and sustenance while the high priest lived. God has appointed the church of our Lord as a city of refuge unto us today and since our high priest will never die it is an eternal provision.

Thus our hope is spoken of as an anchor to the soul. "We

have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner shrine behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek" (Hebrews 6:19, 20). An anchor fastened on but one end is useless. Just being tied to the craft is not enough. When thrown out it *must* take hold of something solid.

One does not see the anchor in the depths nor can he see the rock to which it is fastened. He knows that it is secure by the tautness of the cable and the stability of the ship. So it is with our anchor of hope which is grounded in the Rock of Ages. We cannot envision him because he has gone beyond the curtain of flesh where the physical eye cannot behold. But the tension on the line of faith proves that he is there and we can say of him, "whom having not seen we love." We know that he died but we also know that he lives. We do not worship a dead Christ but a living Saviour. "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again even so them which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." If we believe! This is the basis of the one great hope which provides us shelter and comfort amidst the buffeting storms of life.

Faith reaches back to take hold of the cross which speaks of sins forgiven. Hope reaches forward to take hold of the Christ who speaks of ultimate triumph. In between is love taking hold of both and enabling us to make the present vital and full. These constitute the abiding trio— faith, hope and love— and they satisfy our needs and stimulate our service to our Father and all of his children. These make our life here rich and fruitful and promise an abundant life beyond which will be precious and eternal. Thus the Christian revelation is related to soul expansion and the unfolding personality.

Christianity is adaptable to man as he is and it is capable of making him what God would have him to be. As to the blackened past it enables him to know that the slate is washed clean by the only power capable of doing it. He does not turn

over a new leaf but turns up with a new life. That life is not purposeless or useless. It is dedicated and devoted to adventure on the new frontier of the spirit. Faculties are discovered which were not known to exist, depths are probed which previously were concealed. At the same time, each new day provides new opportunity and the day of death is no exception. Death itself is no longer regarded as a forbidding wall shutting out the light but is seen as a gate opening to brighter vistas in God's tomorrow.

Religion for the space age is simply the faith of the ages. Man cannot outlive his need for it nor travel beyond the point where its tug is not felt upon his heart. So long as men live and die they must have the assurance which comes from the One who died that they might live. We cannot grow so big that we do not need faith although we may become so little that we do not recognize our need. Man cannot save himself by his own intellect or power. He can no more lift himself by his own bookstraps than he can by his own bootstraps. But God has provided for us both the power and wisdom that we need, for it is said that Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God.

"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

The Vitality of Christianity

Contents

It is an accepted thesis in some circles that Christianity is a failure. There are those in our day who regard it as the product of a superstitious age and unworthy of consideration by intellectuals. It is no strange role for the Christian system to be under attack by the philosophers. One of the frequent intimations in our day is that Jesus offered nothing original. It is affirmed that all of the principles he enunciated were but a re-statement of truths and facts learned from previous world performers and wise men.

This accusation is not modern either. It is a rehash of the ridicule heaped upon the apostle Paul in Athens. When he argued in the city square with those who chanced to be there, he met some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers. Because Paul did not employ the jargon of their schools they had difficulty in grasping his theme. They heard him preach about Jesus and the resurrection and they mistook the word for resurrection (*anastasis*) for the name of a goddess. Since they had a female counterpart for all of their gods, they concluded that Paul was introducing a pair of deities, Jesus and Anastasis. The record tells of their puzzlement in these words, "Others said, 'He seems to be a preacher of foreign divinities'— because he preached Jesus and the resurrection."

There were others who asked, "What will this babbler say?" The word for "babbler" is *spermologos*. It literally means "to pick up seeds." Aristophanes used it in one of his plays to

designate the crows which followed the farmer to pick up the grain being sown. Later it was used to describe the sparrows which frequented the marketplace to snatch waste particles or dart upon discarded food particles. Then it was ascribed to the human parasites who lounged around the centers of business activity and lived upon that which fell from the loaded vans and caravans.

As applied to Paul it simply meant that the philosophers regarded him as a gutter-sparrow who had nothing original to offer, but picked up crumbs and scraps of wisdom and combined these into a synthetic philosophy which they regarded as an admixture of Jewish myths about a crucified one and an attempt to palm him off on the credulous as a god who visited the earth in human form. It can be seen that the modern scholastics and "wise men of the age" are simply employing the tactics of their predecessors of some centuries ago.

I do not admit the validity of the accusations made against Christianity nor concur in the conclusions reached by the critics. Instead, I regard Christianity as I do the word which reveals it—alive and energetic (Heb. 4:12). Most of our present great attainments are the result of its influence and the very freedom to criticize it openly is at least partially attributable to the liberty which it has championed. I want to mention five areas in which it has proven its power to alter the thinking and practice of mankind.

1. HUMAN SLAVERY

When the apostles took the message of salvation to the Roman world they encountered an untold number of abject beings in the throes of slavery. It has been estimated that there were sixty million slaves in the Empire. One historian says of them. "At the lowest extreme of the social scale were millions of slaves, without family, without religion, without possessions, who

had no recognized rights, and towards whom none had any recognized duties, passing normally from a childhood of degradation to a manhood of hardship, and an old age of unpitied neglect."

It has always been a point of criticism by the skeptic and infidel that Jesus and the apostles did nothing about slavery. It is affirmed that they made no attack upon it but rather seemed to condone it. This is due to a misunderstanding of the method by which the Son of man accomplished his mission. He did not come as a social reformer or revolutionary. He was not a loud declaimer nor a shouting rabble rouser. It was said of him, "He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory" (Matthew 12:19, 20).

A papyrus reed which had been run over with a chariot wheel was very fragile and the least touch would break it. Smouldering tow needed only the slightest contact to be extinguished. In spite of the gentleness of his approach, however, Jesus was to be effective. He always achieves his goal and brings justice to final victory. He operates not by political upheaval but by changing the hearts and affections of men. Thus Christianity by its principles has overthrown slavery without creating economic chaos. This was done by altering the attitude of men toward one another until the worth and dignity of every individual was known and respected.

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, the Roman slave was not regarded as a person. He was looked upon as a mere *thing*, to be bought, sold and traded on the market like any other commodity. His life was worth only the value placed upon it by his master and frequently this was very low. Augustus nailed one of his slaves to a cross and subjected him to an agonizing death simply because he killed a quail which had been trained to come at a whistle and eat tamely from the emperor's

hand. Vedius Pollis became incensed at one of his slaves who inadvertently dropped and broke a treasured crystal wineglass, and ordered him thrown into a fish pond where bloodthirsty eels stripped him of his flesh and reduced him to a skeleton in a short while.

Even the great philosopher Aristotle taught that master and slave had no common ground upon which to meet, since the master was a person and the slave was a mere object. He declared that "A slave is a living tool, just as a tool is an inanimate slave." The death of Jesus for the guilty sinner established forever the worth of every human being before God. From the day that it became known that every man bears the image of God within, human slavery was doomed.

The victory was gained by teaching that "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do you even so to them" (Matthew 7:12). Then there was the idea that "God hath made of one blood all nations of men" (Acts 12:26), and, "There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but Christ is all and in all." The letter to Philemon concerning his runaway slave, Onesimus, was the death warrant of slavery as surely as if Jesus had come with a literal key to unlock the shackles of every unfortunate human pawn on earth.

Clarkson, in his book, *Abolition of the Slave Trade*, **page 27, says, "Among the evils corrected or subdued, either by the influence of Christianity on the minds of men or by particular association of Christians, the African slave trade appears to me to have occupied the foremost place."**

2. DISRESPECT OF WOMANHOOD

One frequently hears the Christian concept subjected to criticism as a system which relegates women to an inferior or secondary status. Contrary to this, it was the influence of

Christianity which ennobled the woman and has protected her rights wherever faith in Jesus has flourished in the hearts of men. When our Lord was on earth women were looked upon as mere chattels. They were considered in the same light as a piece of furniture— good only to provide for the comfort and convenience of men.

Among the Jews great debates and fervent public discussions had been held about divorce. The majority held that the woman had no right to divorce her husband. Thus the argument was almost wholly about the grounds upon which the husband could dispose of a wife by giving her "her walking papers" so that he could take up with another woman. There were two rabbinical schools and they differed greatly on the subject. The school of Shammai contended that adultery on the part of the wife was the only legal basis for divorce and remarriage. The school of Hillel, in which Gamaliel taught and which Saul of Tarsus attended, insisted that the husband had a right to divorce his wife for even trivial causes.

The interpretation varied only as to what the law meant when it spoke of the husband discovering in his wife "any manner of uncleanness." One Jewish writer says, "In fact, we know that it included every kind of impropriety such as going about with loose hair, spinning in the street, familiarly talking with other men, ill-treating her husband's parents in his presence, brawling, that is, 'speaking to her husband so loudly that the neighbors could hear her in the adjoining house,' a general bad reputation, or the discovery of fraud before marriage."

The Greeks had allowed immorality to become the order of life and practiced it in its grossest forms as a part of their religion. Cult prostitutes and homosexuals were maintained in the heathen temples and the income from their nefarious trade went to support the venial priestcraft which encouraged it. The orator, Demosthenes, described the relationship of the sexes by

saying, 'We have courtesans for the sake of pleasure; we have concubines for the sake of daily cohabitation; we have wives for the purpose of bringing up children legitimately, and of having a faithful guardian for our household affairs." Aristotle wrote that, "Women are beings of a certain intermediate state between freemen and slaves."

To Christians living in such a world, Paul wrote to husbands to love their wives "even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it." He wrote to wives to submit themselves unto their own husbands as unto the Lord. The relationship of husband and wife was placed on the level of the relationship of Christ and the church. Thus it was elevated to a peak of spiritual values such as it had never attained before. The woman was no longer regarded as a thing but as a person purchased by the blood of God's own Son. "Neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman, but all things of God" (1 Cor. 11:11, 12).

No man under the influence of such teaching could ever regard his wife as a mere source of gratification for his selfish desire. It is to the influence of Christian revelation that the world owes all that has been gained in proper reverence for womankind. That revelation lifted the wife from the place of a chattel to that of a companion. It made a vital truth stand out, that "the two are one flesh," so that a man could no more abuse his wife than he would his own person. What a difference was made through such exhortations as that of the apostle Peter, "Likewise you husbands, live considerately with your wives, bestowing honor on the woman as the weaker sex, since you are joint heirs of the grace of life."

3. TAKING HUMAN LIFE FOR SPORT

As the Roman Empire became more decadent and corrupt,

the sensibilities of the populace became more hardened and their tastes more cruel. The investiture of the gods with depraved passions and degenerate practices eventually produced its fruit of degradation. It is an inviolable law that man becomes more like that which he worships each time that he worships. Unconsciously he assumes the traits and cultivates the character which he ascribes to his gods. In the Roman world cruelty and salaciousness became the way of life.

The entertainments became more elaborate and more vicious. Gladiatorial combats in which men hacked each other into bloody bits were featured performances. Life was cheap. The blood spurting from human arteries, severed by the broadsword, stained the sands of the arena but brought no compassionate reaction from the stands. I should like to read you a vivid description of what occurred when men were lashed and driven into the arena to be butchered in order to make a Roman holiday.

"Straightway, tier upon tier, eighty thousand faces rise, up to the last high rank beneath the awning's shade. Meanwhile, under his silken canopy, sits the emperor of the world, sodden-faced, ghastly, swine-eyed, robed in purple; all alone, save for his dwarf, bull-nosed, slit-mouthed, hunch-backed, sly. Next, on the lowest bench, the Vestals, old and young, the elder looking on with hard faces and dry eyes, the youngest with wide and startled looks, and parted lips, and quick-drawn breath that sobs and is caught at sight of each deathly stab and gash of broadsword and trident, and hands that twitch and clutch at each other as a man's foot slips in a pool of blood and the heavy harness clashes in the red, wet sand. Then gray-haired senators; then curled and perfumed knights of Rome; then the people, countless, vast, frenzied, bloodthirsty, stretching out eighty thousand hands with thumbs reversed, commanding death to the fallen— full eighty thousand throats of men and women roaring, yelling, shrieking over each ended life. A theater indeed, a stage indeed, a play wherein every scene of every act ends in sudden

death."

Christianity came pleading, "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice, and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph. 4:31, 32). It summoned the world to remember that some day all men will be brought into judgment, with the words, "By your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment shall be revealed" (Romans 2:5).

The effect of such passages as the following can hardly be estimated. "Repay no evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends upon you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God; for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.' No, if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head."

But the Christians were not content with proclamation alone, they also believed in action. In Fox's *Book of Martyrs* **is recorded the deed of Telemachus, a Christian from the wilds of Asia who came to Rome to preach against murder committed in the name of pleasure. Here is what happened.**

"The show went on; many had been slain, and the people, madly excited by the desperate bravery of those who continued to fight, shouted their applause. But suddenly there was an interruption. A rudely clad, robed figure appeared for a moment among the audience, and then boldly leaped down into the arena. He was seen to be a man of rough but imposing presence, bareheaded and with sun-browned face. Without hesitating an instant he advanced upon two gladiators engaged in a life-and-death struggle, and laying his hand upon one of them sternly reproved him for shedding innocent blood, and then, turning

toward the thousands of angry faces ranged around him, called upon them in a solemn, deep-toned voice which resounded through the deep inclosure. These were his words: 'Do not requite God's mercy in turning away the swords of your enemies by murdering one another!'

"Angry shouts and cries at once drowned his voice: 'This is no place for preaching!— the old customs of Rome must be observed!— On gladiators!' Thrusting aside the stranger, the gladiators would have again attacked each other, but the man stood between, holding them apart, and trying in vain to be heard. 'Sedition! sedition! down with him!' was then the cry; and the gladiators, enraged at the interference of an outsider with their chosen vocation, at once stabbed him to death. Stones, or whatever missiles came to hand, also rained down upon him from the furious people, and thus he perished, in the midst of the arena."

But the aftermath was good, and Fox describes it in these words, "He had died, but not in vain. His work was accomplished at the moment he was struck down, for the shock of such a death before their eyes turned the hearts of the people: they saw the hideous aspects of the favorite vice to which they had blindly surrendered themselves; and from the day Telemachus fell dead in the Colosseum, no other fight of gladiators was ever held there."

The famous Irish historian, W. E. H. Lecky, writing in his *History of European Morals from Augustus to Charlemagne*, **says in Volume 1, page 282: "It is well to look at facts such as these, as they enable us in some degree to estimate the regenerating influence that Christianity has exercised in the world. The destruction of the gladiatorial games is all its work."**

Again, in Volume 2, page 36, he says: "There is scarcely any other single reform so important in the moral history of mankind as the suppression of the gladiatorial shows, and this

feat must be exclusively ascribed to the Christian church."

4. LACK OF REGARD FOR CHILDREN

In no area of human existence is the effect of Christianity seen more favorably than in the care for children. We live in a world where child labor laws make impossible the exploitation of little children for commercial purposes. We have child welfare and aid to dependent children programs. There are hospitals exclusively devoted to crippled children. The courts give special attention to the needs of the young. It is extremely difficult for us to envision the lot of children in ancient Greece and Rome. The merciful influence of Christianity has invaded the hearts of men and women and affected our society beyond our ability to imagine.

In the first place there existed in the pagan world what was known as child exposure. When a baby was born, if it was not wanted, it was simply taken out to the city dump or elsewhere, and tossed away. Scores of babies were left by the Lactarian Pillar in the Roman Forum, and these were gathered up after dark by people who reared them either to sell as slaves or prostitutes while they were still of a tender age. So widespread was this practice that when Justin Martyr inveighs against the morals of the pagans he declares that a man who visits a brothel may actually lie with his own daughter. It must not be thought that such a thing as child exposure was practiced only by the poverty-stricken and illiterate. It was condoned and justified by the most eminent philosophers.

It is the thesis of Plato in his *Republic* that the human flock or herd should be built up by breeding only the best of both sexes of mankind. He says, "Those of inferior parents and any children of the rest that are born defective will be hidden away, in some appropriate manner that must be kept secret." Aristotle writes in his *Politics*, "As to exposing or rearing the children that

are born, let there be a law that no deformed children shall be reared."

Seneca, the great Roman statesman, philosopher and playwright, who later became the tutor to Nero, was probably born the same year as our Lord, and died by his own hands while Paul was imprisoned at Rome. Incidentally, he was the brother of Gallio, the proconsul of Achaia before whom Paul was dragged according to Acts 18:12-16. From him we have an account of the attitude toward crippled or deformed children. Seneca, who was influenced by the Stoics, wrote a series of *Epistulae Morales* to his friend Lucilius, who was an Epicurean. In one of the treatises on *Anger* he says, "Mad dogs we knock on the head; the fierce and savage ox we slay; sickly sheep we put to the knife to keep them from infecting the flock; unnatural progeny we destroy; we drown even children who at birth are weakly and abnormal. Yet it is not anger but reason that separates the harmful from the sound."

All of this lends special significance to the words of Jesus when the disciples, becoming exasperated at mothers trying to bring their children to Jesus, ordered them away. "Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." This raised children to a position they had not previously occupied in that generation among the Greeks and Romans. The crucial blow was struck when Jesus used a child as an object lesson for his ambitious disciples and said, "Whosoever receives one such child in my name receives me," and again, "See that you do not despise one of these little ones; for I tell you that in heaven their angels always behold the face of my Father, who is in heaven."

We cannot fail to see the underlying purpose of the expression, ''bring them up," in Paul's word to fathers. "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." This statement about anger was written near the time of the treatise on "Anger"

penned by Seneca. It is not inconceivable that they may have been written in the same building since Seneca was a very close associate of Sextus Burrus, who was prefect of the Praetorian guard at the very time that Paul was placed in the custody of that guard in Rome. In any event, we have a striking contrast between the concept of the Stoic and that of the Christian, and we can rejoice that the latter prevailed. Every child born into this world is a debtor to the Christian faith.

5. SUPERSTITION

Those who read the pronouncements of modern humanistic philosophers are familiar with the charge that Christianity was born of superstition and grew to maturity to sire and perpetuate it. It is only these philosophers who are modern. The accusation is almost as old as Christianity itself. One has only to read the vain and ridiculous attacks made by Roman satirists in the first century to see that the moderns are but the "trained parrots" of the ancients.

What are the facts? Christianity was cradled in the hearts of slaves and other humble men in an age when superstition was rife. That age was "the twilight of the gods." The structure of classic polytheism was as hollow as its temples were empty. The emperor had been elevated to the status of a god but this served only to drag the gods down to the status of a dissolute emperor. One reads with interest the decrees of Claudius issued in an attempt to bolster faith in the gods. He recognizes that this is an open admission that the gods had abdicated, fleeing from Olympus and being ejected from the inner shrines of the beings of men. The decrees were but injections given to a corpse from which the spirit had departed.

The state of affairs is aptly described by Canon Farrar in that book which he dedicated to the poet, Robert Browning, and which he titled *The Early Days of Christianity***. Here are his**

words: "The upper classes were 'destitute of faith, yet terrified at skepticism.' They had long learnt to treat the current mythology as a mass of worthless fables, scarcely amusing enough for even a schoolboy's laughter, but they were the ready dupes of every wandering quack who chose to assume the character of a *mathematicus* or a *mage*. Their official religion was a decrepit Theogony; their real religion was a vague and credulous fatalism, which disbelieved in the existence of the gods, or held with Epicurus that they were careless of mankind. The mass of the populace either accorded to the old beliefs a nominal adherence which saved them the trouble of giving any thought to the matter, and reduced their creed and their morals to a survival of national habits; or else they plunged with eager curiosity into the crowd of foreign cults."

The Christian faith is adapted to the needs of a crazy, mixed-up world. It was born at a time when men were pleasure-mad and living in a helter-skelter social atmosphere where suicide was advocated as an honorable way to escape the pressures and tensions of human existence. It came like a fresh breeze from the ocean of divine love blowing through the fetid tenements of the city on the Tiber. Men lost their fear of the unknown when they came to know Him who knows all. They ceased to be frightened by the gods of the people when they became "the people of God." It is not necessary that we know what the future holds when we know him who holds the future.

I deny that Christianity is either the daughter or the handmaiden of superstition. It is the greatest liberating force in the universe. Superstition is founded upon fear but Christianity is based upon love. "Perfect love casteth out fear." Superstition drives men to drink, drugs and death. Christianity leads men to love, light and life. Those who, under the guise of superior wisdom, deride the Christian way and deny its efficacy in our modern life, are only pleading for a return to the jungle with its "law of fang and claw." The fact that it will become an asphalt jungle with revolver and switchblade knife substituted for the

more primitive weapons makes it only more dangerous.

Our real hope lies with Christianity. Its vitality has been attested in the centuries past. The transformed life must accompany the informed mind, or our intellectual abilities will only refine our cruelties and perfect our callousness. I believe that the Christian faith is like the Lord who gave it unto us, capable of rising from the grave in which men seek to confine it. It matters little whether the grave be a sepulcher hewn out of stone or carved in a heart of stone. There is no power which can resist the Spirit by which Jesus was raised when the fulness of God's time arrives in any generation of the world.

Think of the victories of the cross! Look about you and count your blessings and as you do, be enthralled by the realization that these are your heritage from Calvary. Life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness, the rights of free men in a free society— all of these are products, directly or indirectly, of the Christian faith. We have no apology to offer for the faith of our fathers. That faith is as divine as our fathers were human. If in their humanity, they made mistakes we should profit by them. We can improve upon their lives but not upon their faith. That which God gave is perfect, that which we return to him is not!

Christianity is alive! It is vital! It is the answer to all of the problems of this age as it was the answer in that age in which it was first revealed. It has not been weighed in the balances and found wanting. It is the balance in which we shall be weighed! Let us seek to make it the compelling force that it can become when translated into life.

The Scarlet Line

Contents

Joshua and Jericho! These two names have become famous in song and story. When I mention them I know that immediately we have the attention of every listener. All of us who are familiar with the Bible remember that, after forty years of leadership through what was called a terrible wilderness, Moses was retired from his post by God and Joshua was designated to lead into Canaan the descendants of those whom Moses had led out of Egypt.

Joshua was a strategic general. He knew the value of a preliminary survey of the lay of the land. While his host was in camp across the Jordan River from Jericho he sent two members of his secret service to spy on the city and to bring him a report of their reconnaissance action. As soon as the men entered the city they located the house of a harlot, whose name was Rahab, and here they established their temporary headquarters. The counterintelligence forces of the king of Jericho were on the alert, however, and they informed the king the same night that the spies had infiltrated their ranks. When it was ascertained where they were concealed the king sent members of his secret police to Rahab and demanded that the men be turned over to the authorities. Rahab informed them that the men had indeed visited her but she told them they had left at dusk just before the city gates were closed for the night. She urged the police to waste no time in pursuing the fugitives. So convincing was her story that the guards immediately left the

city and hastened to the fords of the Jordan, after first checking to see that the gates of the city were closed and barred.

During this time the spies lay hidden under stalks of flax which were drying on the roof, a place of concealment to which Rahab had brought them. When she came to discuss a possible way of escape she informed them of her trust in the Lord whom they served. Although reared in a pagan environment and among idolaters, she had heard enough about the wonders which the Lord had performed for Israel that she did not doubt any longer but what His will would be done. She mentioned the miracle performed at the Red Sea when the people came out of Egypt, as well as the utter overthrow of the two Amorite kings, Sihon and Og, in the land of Trans-Jordania. She declared that these combined acts of power, one against the forces of nature and the other against the forces of armed might, had completely unnerved the armies of Jericho and there was no heart left in them.

I cannot resist mentioning just here that we have one of those undesigned coincidences which lend so much support to the Biblical account of miracles. For a number of years those critics who have been devoting their time to discrediting the miraculous have scoffed at the record of how the Red Sea was divided so the forces of Israel could go through on dry land. They have sought to account for it by many and devious ways, the most popular of which has been that a terrific wind from the desert may have blown across the shallow water and whipped much of it out of its channel so that the water appeared to be separated. But the account of what happened had preceded the Israelites and was of sufficient credibility to melt the resistance and lower the morale of nations which did not even believe in God. Rahab said, 'We have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you."

One purpose of miraculous events was to make believers. In the case of Rahab they achieved that purpose. Since she did

not doubt the success of Israel's invasion she was interested in protecting the lives of her family. She wanted the men to reciprocate her kindness in sparing their lives by sparing the lives of her relatives. The men made a solemn oath that if she would not reveal their purpose in coming they would save her family when the land fell into their hands. Since her house was built with an upper window projecting over the town wall Rahab lowered the men over the wall with a scarlet line or rope.

The men said, "Behold, when we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window, which thou didst let us down by: and then thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's household home unto thee. And it shall be, that whosoever shall go out of the doors of thy house into the street, his blood shall be upon his head, and we will be guiltless: and whosoever shall be with thee in the house, his blood shall be on our head, if any hand be upon him." This part of the narrative closes with the words, "And she bound the scarlet line in the window."

There are some things in the story I would like to have you note very carefully. Remember that there were many houses in the city of Jericho, but there was only one with the promise of life when the time of Judgment and destruction came. It was the house protected by the scarlet line. This was the real mark of identity. This was the criterion of hope. Those who were behind the scarlet line were safe, those who were not had no promise. It was not enough to come into this house but those who did so had to remain there until delivered from fear. Those who went back out or who ventured into the street had no hope. The only possibility of salvation was to enter the house protected by the scarlet line and remain there.

Since we have made reference to the time when the children of Israel were delivered from the bondage of Egypt let us go back in our minds to that occasion and think about some of the means used by God to effect their freedom from slavery.

You will recall that while Moses was an exile and shepherd in the land of Midian he received word from God to return to the land of Egypt and demand of Pharaoh that he let the people go. Pharaoh was haughty and arrogant. He refused to hearken unto the words of God as spoken by Moses and Aaron so it became necessary for God to visit a series of calamities upon the land in order to break down his resistance. We commonly refer to these as the ten plagues.

One after another, in awful sequence, these tragedies befell the land until nine had passed. The long-suffering of God had been taxed to the utmost and he said to Moses, "Yet will I bring one plague more upon Pharaoh and upon Egypt, afterwards he will let you go hence." The tenth disaster would take the life of the firstborn in every house in Egypt. Now it was true among the Egyptians as among many other ancient peoples that the firstborn was looked upon with special reverence and respect. Later on, God was to demand the firstborn of every family of Israel, the firstborn of all domesticated animals, and the firstfruits of all cultivable trees and crops, because he had redeemed the firstborn unto himself by the destruction of the firstborn of Egypt.

The decree on the fateful night was, "About midnight I will go out into the midst of Egypt, and all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sitteth upon the throne, even unto the firstborn of the maidservant that is behind the mill; and all the firstborn of beasts. And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it any more" (Exodus 11:4-6). It was to be a night of judgment and there would be varied emotions. The freed captives would rejoice exceedingly and those who had held them captive would engage in unrestrained weeping and wailing.

Of special interest is the feast ordained to mark the occasion, for God often used festivals as monuments to

outstanding events which he wished to have commemorated. Even the name given to the feast is of significance. It was called "the passover." On the tenth day of the month, the head of each household was told to take a lamb and pen it up. On the fourteenth day of the month the lamb was to be killed "between the evenings," that is, at approximately three o'clock in the afternoon, as we count time. The lamb was to be slain in such a manner that not a bone in its body was broken.

The blood of the lamb was to be caught in a basin and the instruction of God was, "And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the basin, and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning. For the Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood on the lintel, and on the two side posts, the Lord will *pass over* the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you" (Exodus 12:22, 23). As God phrased it at another time, "And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where you are; and when I see the blood I will pass over you."

Let us now notice a few details of the first passover. The houses in Egypt that were to be spared from the visit of the death angel were those which had been protected by the blood of a slain lamb. It was not enough that the lamb be killed but the blood had to be applied to be effective. It is noteworthy that the blood was swiped on the lintel over the door and on the two side posts. It was not placed on the threshold for this was to be a type of the blood of Christ and not even in type was the blood of the Son of God to be trodden underfoot (Hebrews 10:29). The blood of the lamb was a scarlet line on the front of the houses.

Safety lay only inside the house which had the blood applied. It was said that none should go out of the house until morning. The night of death could be safely overcome only by remaining behind the blood line. Deliverance was by blood! And

this brings us to consideration of another scarlet line of blood which extended for thousands of years from the altar of Abel to the cross of Christ.

Most of you have heard the story of the British rope-making firm which always wove a strand of red into every rope produced in its factory. This became a mark of identification for its product all over the world. Wherever a foot of severed rope was found it could always be traced to its source by this red line running through the midst of it. The same can be said for God's revelation. The word "religion" means literally to "bind back." The divinely ordained rope by which we are bound back to God has a strand of scarlet from its inception to its culmination. This is the identifying mark of singularity by which we can determine its origin.

When Adam and Eve were driven from the primeval garden, two sons were born unto them. The firstborn, Cain, grew up to be a farmer. His brother, Abel, became a shepherd. These are the oldest occupations in the world. The Bible tells us that "in the course of time" each of these brought an offering unto the Lord. Cain brought the produce of his fields but Abel brought lambs from his flock. "The Lord had regard for Abel and his offering, but for Cain and his offering he had no regard." Occasionally I meet some person who thinks God acted arbitrarily in this case. I do not think so at all.

It is my view that Abel brought the kind of sacrifice that God requested while Cain substituted something else. I regard this as an instance of will worship. Of course, in one sense, all worship is will worship. We either say to God, "Thy will be done," or "My will be done." If I am questioned as to my ground for thinking that God had specified the kind of offering he wanted I refer to Hebrews 11:4, "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.'

"Now faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). Faith is simply the belief of testimony. Where there is no testimony there is no faith. Faith cannot go beyond the testimony. Where testimony ends, faith ends. If Abel acted by faith he must have proceeded upon the basis of God's expressed will. Thus, in the first two men born upon the earth, we have a demonstration of obedience based upon faith and of disobedience based upon lack of faith or concern. In Matthew 23:35 Jesus calls Abel "righteous," but in 1 John 3:12 it is said that "Cain was of that wicked one and slew his brother." The righteous are those who heed the voice of God, the unrighteous are those who heed the voice of the wicked one.

Why did God require a blood sacrifice which made imperative the death of an innocent victim? It was certainly not because of any pleasure derived merely from seeing animals die or beholding their carcasses consumed by flame. The writer of Hebrews has Jesus saying to the Father, "In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure." It was not because there was any efficacy in the death of animals to purge the sins of men. "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins."

Perhaps we can better grasp the divine intention by an understanding of two words in the context in which these very expressions occur. In Hebrews 10:1 we are told that, "the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect." The word "shadow" is applied to the animal sacrifices. But there can be no shadow without a substance. In order to have a shadow it is necessary to have three things— a reality, a light, and a reflection. As the light shines upon the substance a reflection is cast backwards and creates a shadow.

The light is the glorious gospel (2 Cor. 4:4) and as it shines upon the cross of Jesus we can see that the sacrifices which

preceded his death were simply pale reflections or mere outlines of "good things to come." Before the light shone, those who offered the sacrifices regarded them as the reality. Now we can recognize them for what they are and for what they were intended to be. The Greek word for "shadow" is one that would have been used to represent a negative if the art of photography had existed in the days of Jesus. The word for "image" is actually the word for *portrait*. The developed photograph is found in Jesus Christ our Lord and in him we can clearly see the details of God's purpose. The animal sacrifices were the *negative*, his sacrifice is the *positive* representation of God's word. The idea of the photograph is a good illustration because the word literally means "written in light."

God began a scarlet line with the altar of Abel. It flowed through the centuries and ended only when the spear was thrust into the side of Jesus and his blood gushed forth. In Acts 20:28 we learn that God purchased the church "with the blood of his Own." The scarlet line provides salvation for "the house of God which is the church of the living God" (1 Tim. 2:15). There is but one body or church in the world for the church is a divine building created of living stones. Those who are in the church are behind the scarlet line. They have the protection promised by God to all who are in Christ Jesus.

There are some persons so foolish as to argue that they can be saved as well out of the church as in it. They overlook the fact that when God appoints salvation in a place one must be in that place or suffer the consequences. God appointed salvation inside the ark constructed by Noah and those who were outside of it perished. He appointed salvation in the cities of refuge which he set aside in the possessions of the tribes and those who did not enter them were slain by the avenger of blood. In Egypt on the night of the passover salvation lay behind the blood line and those who went out of the houses protected by it died for their daring. In the city of Jericho salvation was found only in the house of Rahab. Those who were outside were destroyed. God

has ordained that the saved ones today be in the church. It is our shelter against evil and destruction. In it our "life is hid with Christ in God."

The cross of Calvary gave meaning to every altar constructed by Abel and Abraham, by Jacob and Job. The blood flowing from the bodies of slain beasts was not an end in itself but simply the means to an end. Recently a group of cave explorers, who call themselves "spelunkers" set out to investigate a portion of a cavern in Missouri where no one had even gone before. As they went along they unrolled a ball of red string which was securely fastened to the wall at the entrance. If they became lost or confused by the tortuous trail they pursued they could always trace their way back to the light by following the red line. So God makes it possible for mankind groping in darkness to follow the blood line until it terminates at the point where the light of the world was seen in the fulness of glory. Without the cross the altars and sacrifices would have led nowhere and all would have been utter confusion. The old rugged cross is the terminal of a long rugged road.

One of the great hospitals in a large midwestern city has worked out a clever method of saving time and personnel. There are three different lines of colored tile laid down the corridor from the very entrance. If a visitor asks how to get to the cafeteria he is told to follow the yellow line; if he wants to get to the elevator he is instructed to follow the blue line. The center line is red and it guides donors directly to the blood bank. God drew a red line from man's entrance into the world, from the Garden of Eden, and by following it man was led from the door of sin to the great blood bank of heaven, the cross of Jesus, where the whole world can be transfused and given new lease upon life by his blood. Here we do not come as givers but as receivers; here love reaches us and assures us that in Him we are safe. Man who was at cross purposes with God is restored by the "cross purpose" of heaven.

Let us think again of the house of Rahab, the only house in Jericho where there was safety, and that because it was under the protection of the scarlet line. Rahab knew that destruction was coming and she also knew where hope of life could be found. Her relatives depended for their preservation upon the information she furnished and upon the invitation she gave them to come into the house. Without her willingness to share the news with them they would have been destroyed. The same thing is true today. Those who are in the house of God and who know about the salvation provided by the blood of Jesus are obligated to take this message to all who are outside. The invitation to come in must be given. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come; let him that heareth say, Come." If men are lost through our indifference or carelessness their blood will be upon our heads.

But it is not enough to enter God's house. One must remain behind the blood or be lost. To go out again into the street of sin is to invite disaster and catastrophe. God does not force anyone to enter nor hold them captive against their will or volition. We come in by choice and remain through desire. It would no doubt amaze us if we knew how many begin the race of life and never finish it, or how many are lost by defection. Once when I was a mere lad I witnessed the burning of a barn in which a number of horses were stabled. A few of them could be reached and were led to safety, but several of these jerked loose from their rescuers and dashed back into the raging inferno where their agonized screams betokened the torture preceding death. One can excuse this precipitous action upon the part of unreasoning animals but how can we account for rational beings who were saved from sin plunging back into a state where they will suffer the pangs of hell?

In Jericho those who went out into the street brought their own blood upon their heads. Their rashness brought death because they deserted the only place which offered hope of life. There was no exception made. Whether one went out to meet friends, to transact business, to pursue pleasure, or to satisfy idle

curiosity, he had to pay the price for his folly. Nor did it make any difference how long he had been in the house before he went out. His refusal to abide by the decree of the spies, the servants of God, was sufficient to incur death. A great many today are lured by business and pleasure, or by worldly friends. Some who have been in God's shelter for years abandon it to follow their fleshly inclinations. But the choice must be made between his blood upon our hearts or our blood upon our heads.

We believe that a correct understanding of the design of the scarlet line flowing down the altars of past ages will be a sufficient answer to the liberal critics of our own day. These often scoff at the old covenant scriptures. They talk in derision about God as "a bloody butcher" and speak of "a slaughter house religion." They look at the form and not the spirit and confuse the shadow with the substance. Seen in proper perspective the validity of sacrifice is apparent to one who loves God. The age of animal sacrifices is regarded as an educative interval leading the minds of men upward and onward. It was essential to lead a world of fallen mankind to a correct apprehension of the enormity of sin, the nature of redemption and the majesty of God.

The shedding of blood speaks eloquently to a careless world of how God regards sin. We are prone to excuse and minimize our transgressions. 'We regard our iniquity too lightly, forgetting that it affects our being in every department of our existence— physically, mentally, morally and spiritually. Sin corrupts the heart, sears the conscience, alienates the affections and pollutes the body. But no man can be rescued who does not know that he is in danger. One will not be saved who does not recognize that he is lost. The full impact of sin must be brought home to the indifferent. Nothing is more calculated to do this than to see death inflicted upon an innocent victim and to know that the suffering and loss incurred comes because of one's own guilt.

In the kindergarten and elementary days of human development, when mankind was passing through the ages of infancy and childhood, and the race had to be taught by object lessons, God brought home to human consciousness through sacrifices, lessons that could be learned in no other fashion. Before we accuse the heavenly Father of unworthy tactics, let us at least seek to understand the motivations behind his actions and requirements. When we do we will see that sacrifices were not offered to arouse benevolent feelings in God nor to stimulate his mercy and loving kindness. Instead of our calling God's grace into active application by sacrifice, it was the grace of God active in our behalf which provided sacrifice for lessons we could learn in no other way. A parent should not be censured for allowing children to play in the shadows when their eyes have been blinded and they must approach the light by degrees. It is an act of mercy not to thrust them at once into the full glare of the sunlight. Sacrifice is not the cause of His love but an effect of it. It is not the key that unlocks the door of God's goodness unto us but a manifestation of a loving heart that even our sin could not close against us.

The scarlet line not only binds us back to God and to each other as "blood brothers" of the Lamb, but it binds together and correlates into one harmonious whole the entire revelation of God. The message to the patriarchs who led a nomadic existence, and to whom God spoke in lonely solitude, is related to that which was thundered from the summit of Sinai at the constitution of a nation come to birth. And both are tied by altar and sacrifice to the Christian message of the cross with its cleansing blood. The unity of purpose, the consistency of design, the significance of a pattern— these are seen in the whole body of the sacred scriptures.

The cross was not a mere after-thought. It was not an expedient devised at the last minute. It did not result as a mere answer to human conspiracy. Instead it was the culmination of a plan of the ages, the capsheaf upon an eternal program of

salvation. It was the one sacrifice to which all other sacrifices pointed, the altar of all altars. This fact alone brings assurance and inspires confidence as nothing else can do.

We exist in a modern Jericho, filled with pagan ideas and idolatrous worship. The ancient gods were things made with men's hands; the modern things become gods in men's minds. Still today, as then. a place of safety is provided. Then it was a scarlet line which provided a way of escape for men of God and became a symbol of protection for all who came in and remained behind it. Now it is a scarlet line of blood offering remission to those who trust in Jesus and heed his call to come in from the streets of sin. The house of God is plainly identified. It is the place where the scarlet line is displayed as the hope of salvation. We urge all who have not entered that house to do so at once. Salvation is inside, death is outside! Each of us is confronted with the choice between life and death. Let us not forget the word of him who spoke to the captives of Egypt. "When I see the blood. I will pass over you!"

Power In the Blood

Contents

How much attention do you pay to the sentiment expressed in the songs we sing? Do you concentrate upon the words and seek to understand the message they contain? I fear that all too often we are motivated primarily by catchy words and lilting melodies, and our singing becomes more sensual than spiritual. Under such circumstances we do not so much worship the Father as we entertain ourselves. I want to talk with you about the significance of an old familiar hymn and kindle an appreciation for it in our hearts. I refer to the song entitled "There's power in the blood!" Just what power is to be found in the blood of Jesus?

1. CLEANSING POWER

The blood of Christ is the only solvent in the universe which can remove both sin and its stain. In the days when Jesus was upon earth, men did not possess the bleaches which they can now purchase commercially. Cloth was bleached by men who were called "fullers." So important was this craft that in the excavated city of Pompeii the building which was the headquarters of the fullers' guild or union ranked second only to the basilica. In the prophecy of Malachi which predicts the coming of John the Baptist and Jesus, our Lord was declared to be "like fullers' soap" (3:2). This is significant because of the statement about the garments of Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. "His garments became glistening, intensely

white, as no fuller on earth could bleach them" (Mark 9:3). Of the redeemed in the heavenly vision, it was affirmed, "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Revelation 7:14). The blood of Jesus accomplished what no earthly power could do.

In our modern day and with our automatic washers we do not use soap. Detergents have been developed to take its place. We may fall into the mistaken notion that the Bible is old-fashioned because it refers to "soap" but that is not so at all. The word "detergent" is a combined form of *de*, which means "off or away," and *tergere*, which means "to wipe." A detergent is that which wipes away soil and stain. Jesus is described as the one "that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood" (Rev. 1:5).

When we talk of sins that are grievous we refer to them as "black" but the Bible calls such aggravated transgressions "red." "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool" (Isaiah 1:18). This is due to the fact that the crimson dye which was extracted from the shell of a little mollusk called the *murex* was impervious to sun or water. It was non-fading and tub-fast as our advertisements say. Scarlet stain could only be removed by the crimson flood that flowed from our Lord in his death. There is no sin more powerful than the blood of God's Son. It is an insult to refuse to come to him because you think you are too great a sinner. You cannot be a greater sinner than he is a Savior.

Perhaps you enlisted in the Christian life and the going became too rough and you gave up. You may feel that there is no hope for you now, that all is lost and that you are helpless, hapless and hopeless. I come with a word of cheer for you. Not only does the blood of Jesus cleanse us from our past sins but it continues to cleanse us from contaminating influences. In 1 John

1:7 the record says, "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin." The word here used for "cleansing" signifies a continuing action. It does not refer to an act which is performed once for all and is never repeated. It literally means that the blood of Jesus keeps on cleansing from all sin. There is power in the blood to take away your sense of guilt, to purge and purify your heart, and to give you a "clean slate."

2. LIFE-GIVING POWER

The Bible implies that man was a vegetarian until after the flood. When God created man, he said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed which is upon the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food." But after the deluge, when God blessed Noah and his sons, he said, "Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you, and as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything." In allowing this freedom to eat flesh, God placed one restriction upon it. "Only you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood."

This ban has never been lifted. It existed throughout the Patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations, and when a question arose in the early church as to what should be demanded of Gentiles, the apostles, elders and congregation at Jerusalem, in conjunction with the Holy Spirit, wrote unto them that they should abstain from blood (Acts 15:29). The reason for this divine regulation is revealed in Leviticus 17:10, 11. God declared that if an Israelite or foreigner who lived in the land was guilty of eating blood, he would set his face against that person and cut him off from among the people. He then declares, "For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement, by reason of the life."

Through the years some who profess to be scientific have sought to throw the Bible on the scrap heap of antiquity. They have implied that it was behind the times, suited only for an ignorant and superstitious people, and wholly unfitted to deal with the needs of a cultured civilization. It is interesting to note that, as greater scientific research has uncovered additional truths, the Bible has been vindicated and has been proven to be ahead of the times, rather than behind them. We are reminded of the story of the race between the hare and the tortoise. The hare started out briskly and when he got far enough ahead took time out for a nap. When he awakened he looked back down the trail but the tortoise was not yet in sight. He loped off casually toward the goal only to find the tortoise there awaiting his arrival.

The subject we are now dealing with is a good illustration of what we mean. For generations medical science in its most advanced state regarded every disease as an indication that the blood was unduly affected and should be drained from the body. Actually, the barbers were the physicians, and the barber pole with its red and white alternating bands still stands as a visible symbol of the blood and the white bandages which were wrapped around the patient after the blood had been drawn from his veins.

It is altogether possible that the death of George Washington was hastened by his medical practitioners. When the famous general became ill at night after exposure to rain and snow the day before, a Mr. Rawlins came at daybreak and drew slightly less than a pint of blood from his veins. About nine o'clock in the morning Dr. Craik took more blood and did the same two hours later. When the specialist, Dr. Dick, arrived at about three o'clock in the afternoon, he consulted with the other physicians and they decided to take more blood. The patient died that night shortly after ten o'clock.

Medical science has at last come to realize the need of

blood transfusion, and in cases where the patient shows signs of alarming weakness, instead of taking blood from the veins it is injected into them. The Bible revealed the fact that blood was the life of the flesh in the days of Noah. Modern science has caught up with the revelation of God in this respect.

Just as physical life is sustained by blood so our spiritual life is maintained by the blood of Jesus. We are members of his body and he has given us a memorial service in which every member partakes of the cup which he declares to be the new covenant in his blood (1 Cor. 11:25). This circulates to each member and maintains a sense of constant relationship with the body. It is the unity with Christ Jesus which makes spiritual life possible.

3. PEACE-PRODUCING POWER

When Our Lord came into the world, mankind was divided into Jew and Greek. A state of animosity existed between these two great segments of the human family. The Jews regarded the Gentiles as unclean and a great gulf existed between the two peoples. Each morning the devout Jew offered a prayer to God in which he thanked the heavenly Father that he had not been made a Gentile, a slave, or a woman. The apostle Paul describes the Gentiles thus, "Remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world." He urges the saints to "no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the hostility of their minds." He declares that the Gentiles "are darkened in their understanding and alienated from the life of God because of the darkness that is in them."

In spite of the great divergences between the two peoples it was the design of heaven to make the Gentiles "fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in

Christ Jesus through the gospel" (Eph. 3:6). The Mystery of the ages was how this could be accomplished. In its outworking the plan did not contemplate making Jews of the Gentiles, nor Gentiles of the Jews. "Was anyone at the time of his call already circumcised? Let him not seek to remove the marks of circumcision. Was anyone at the time of his call uncircumcised? Let him not seek circumcision. For neither circumcision counts for anything nor uncircumcision, but keeping the commandments of God" (1 Cor. 7:18, 19).

Jesus did not effect unity by moving the people but by removing the wall between them. The oneness was achieved by breaking down the barrier which separated them. He simply spanned the gulf between them. The Latin word for priest is *pontifex*. This means "bridge builder." Jesus is our great high priest and as such he has built a bridge across the chasm between God and man, and between man and man. The magnetic force which draws us closer to God and to each other is his blood. "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near in the blood of Christ" (Eph. 2:13). The apostle goes on to declare, "For he is our peace, who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law of commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace."

The little word "so" is the one that should be emphasized in this passage as it ought to be in many other passages. It relates to method, means or agency. It shows how a thing was accomplished. "So making peace." Notice how it was done. Our peace is *personal*. It is not achieved by a plan, program or proposition. "He is our peace." In the last analysis all peace must be personal because it is a relation between persons. Our peace is a divine *product*. He "made us both one." We did not come together but we came to Him and this brought us together. Our peace is *practical*. "He broke down the dividing wall of hostility." The spite fence has been abrogated. When you wall others out

you wall yourself in. The higher you build the wall of hate the less sunshine you can enjoy. Our peace is *purposeful*. It was to "reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby bringing the hostility to an end" (Eph. 2:16).

It would seem that if we are to pattern after our Lord we need to build bridges rather than walls between brethren. To the extent that we create areas of hostility we undo His glorious work. We can make the power of His blood effective by striving for reconciliation with God and with each other. Do we not miss the whole purpose of the Christian life when we allow ourselves to be estranged from our brethren and permit hatred and envy to destroy the work for which Christ died?

4. CEMENTING POWER

Not long ago I learned a good lesson. I was attempting to repair a chair and I applied glue to the broken part. Then I put wood clamps on to hold the pieces together. I drew them up perfectly and it appeared that I would have an excellent job. I did have so long as I left the clamps in place, but when I removed them and tested the strength of the place that I had repaired it pulled apart again. The glue did not create a strong enough bond to withstand the pressure. I found out that it is one thing to bring two elements together but a wholly different thing to keep them so under stress and strain.

God knew this, of course, and he provided not only the power to draw us together in Christ but the power to keep us together. There is a slang expression extant in our day to describe one who loses control of himself under tension and pressure. Such a person is said to "come unglued." God does not want the body of Christ to suffer such a predicament, nor to be like the doll which the little girl dropped on the concrete porch, only to run screaming to her mother, "Mama, please help me, my baby has exploded!"

There is power in the blood of God's dear Son to keep us one in Him. It has been said that human blood is the most powerful cohesive force in the world. Robert Ripley, in "Believe It or Not" tells the story of a bridge built across the Tillis River in the Caucasian Mountains. This stone bridge has withstood the raging spring torrents for centuries while every other has been washed away many times. Ripley declares that the secret lies in the fact that centuries ago, when slaves were so cheap in the area as to be considered worthless, their blood was used to mix the mortar to lay the bridge. The helpless victims of an inhuman master were slaughtered on the spot and their blood drained into the mortar. You may, as Mr. Ripley suggests, believe this or not, but I trust that you will believe in the adhesive power of the blood of Christ.

In Colossians 1:19, 20 it is said of Christ, "For in him all the fulness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross." It was not enough that he should make peace by a process of reconciliation, so verse 17 declares, "He is before all things, and in him all things hold together." The strength of Jesus is not abated by the passing of the centuries. The tie that binds does not grow weaker under the relentless attack of time. If it be true that "in him all things hold together," we should be ashamed of our strife and division which holds us apart. There is power in the blood!

5. RANSOMING POWER

Abraham Lincoln has been called "The Great Emancipator" because it was through his influence that "The Emancipation Proclamation" was drawn up and signed. This document which was issued on New Year's Day in 1863, conferred liberty on more than three million slaves, who were declared to be "then, thenceforward, and forever free." In spite of its far-reaching effect upon the Civil War, this step was as

nothing compared to the act of our "Great Emancipator" who died on the cross to ransom the slaves of sin.

The apostle Peter said, "You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your fathers, not with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish and without spot." It is possible that the minds of those so addressed would revert at once to the passover lamb and the circumstances connected with the feast which was inaugurated therewith. The children of Israel had left a significant symbol to the Israel of God in the Christian dispensation.

In Egypt the children of Israel were in bondage and in dire straits. They were hopeless to rescue themselves when God intervened. On the night of their deliverance the death angel was sent over the land to strike the firstborn of every home not protected by the blood of a lamb which was without spot or blemish. The story of this great event was rehearsed annually in every Jewish home. All were familiar with the means by which salvation had been obtained for their fathers. They knew the words quoted by Isaiah, "For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Savior. For I gave Egypt for thy ransom."

But the passover lamb was but a type of our Lord, of whom it was said, "For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. 5:7). It was his precious blood which ransomed the slaves cringing under the lash of Satan. He gave deliverance to those who were bound and set the captives free. During his earthly sojourn he said, "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:28). After he had returned to heaven the apostle Paul declared of him that he "gave his life a ransom for all, to be testified of in due time" (1 Tim. 2:6).

In recent years we have come to think of the word "ransom" in connection with crime and tragedy. A child is

kidnapped and held for ransom. Frantic parents are notified of the amount demanded and seek to meet the requirements in order to have their loved one safely back again. This is not exactly the meaning of the word in the sacred scriptures, but even here there are some likenesses. Certainly when we were captured by sin God loved us and wanted us to be at home with him. However, this love was not manifested when we were his beloved children but when we were enemies. Paul says, "But God showed his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). In the very same context he declares, "For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life."

Ransom, reconciliation, and rejoicing— what tremendous words these are. How they speak of grace and mercy, of love so full and free. No wonder the record says, "We also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received our reconciliation." We must not think of the sacrifice on our behalf as being accidental. Men did not so much take the life of Jesus as he gave it. He was not stricken down in life but he laid down his life. This indicates deliberation and purpose. In the beautiful parable of the shepherd and the sheep, Jesus makes a simple statement which is pregnant with meaning, "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." He concludes by saying, "The Father loves me because I lay down my life, to receive it back again. No one has robbed me of it; I am laying it down of my own free will. I have the right to lay it down, and I have the right to receive it back again; this charge I have received from my Father" (John 9:18).

A proper understanding of this should enable some of us to correct our speech. Occasionally someone speaks of Jesus as having spilled his blood. The scriptures nowhere sanction such an expression. Instead, the term "shed" is used. Thus, our Lord in ordaining the memorial feast said of the cup, "Drink from it, all of you. For this is my blood, the blood of the covenant, shed

for many for the forgiveness of sins." Again it is affirmed that under the old covenant "without the shedding of blood there was no remission" (Heb. 9:22). The word "spill" in our modern day generally connotes the result of an accident, but the blood of Jesus was shed on purpose and for a purpose.

What value can be placed upon blood as a redemptive agent? I know a college student who has paid a part of his expenses by periodically selling his blood to be used for transfusing patients who are critically ill. He has never seen the patients and does not know if his blood has saved them or not. With him it is a simple commercial transaction. How different it is with the patients for whom it is a matter of life and death. But no money on earth could purchase our lease upon spiritual life. "Not with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ." The word "precious" is the translation of an original term which meant "Of superlative value, of great price." This was heaven's investment in each one of us.

6. SANCTIFYING POWER

The word "blood" occurs more frequently in the letter to the Hebrews than in any of the other new covenant epistles. The reason for this will become obvious to the student who remembers that Hebrews is a treatise on priesthood. The design of the writer is to show the superiority of the priesthood of Jesus over that of Levi, and priesthood is directly concerned with sacrifices and offerings. The relation of blood to priestly service is best understood by a study of chapter nine where the theme is discussed at length and the contrast clearly shown. In this one chapter the word "blood" occurs twelve times.

The chapter begins with a description of the tabernacle and the furniture found in both the holy place and the most holy place. The author closes his brief descriptive paragraph with the statement that it is not his intention to deal specifically with each

item of furniture. The implication is that there is a typical significance attached to the various items but his present procedure will not permit him to indulge the time required to portray this in detail. He plunges immediately into the theme at hand which concerns the service of the priests.

Whereas the priests daily officiated in the holy place before the veil, it was not so with the holy of holies. Into the awesome darkness of this cubicle behind the veil, only the high priest was allowed to go and he was restricted to one visit per year, on the great day of atonement. On this occasion he took blood with him which he offered for his own sins and for those of the people. The writer points out that as long as this practice was in vogue it was apparent that "the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest." The people could not go behind the veil and thus could not approach the mercy seat where God abode between the cherubim. That this was to be a temporary arrangement, however, is proven by the statement that the regulations and carnal ordinances imposed were to be effective "until the time of reformation."

In the very next phrase we learn what is meant by the reformation. The record says, "But Christ being come." The advent of Christ into the world wrought a greater change than most of us realize. Even the very method of counting time was altered. A new calendar was inaugurated. It was as if the world paused and time stood still— and life began anew. His coming not only brought new light for the future but cast new light upon the things of the past. Those things which had seemed to be realities were shown to be but shadows. The values attached to them for themselves were proven to be worthless and their only value lay in their relationship unto Him.

The tabernacle made with hands derived its chief importance, not from the fact that it provided a way of worship before Christ came, but because it was the undeveloped negative of the "greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with

hands." The high priest was significant, not because of what he accomplished by his annual pilgrimage with blood into the holy place, but because he was really pre-figuring the piercing of the flesh curtain by Jesus and his return into heaven itself "bearing his own blood." For the first time in the history of sacrificial offerings the reason behind the requirement of the blood of bulls and goats could be understood. It was not that such blood could take away sin. It was not that God desired sacrifices and burnt offerings for his own pleasure. Instead, the blood flowing from the slit jugular veins of lower animals constituted an ever-lengthening red finger pointing with increasing hope toward the unknown future and culminating at the cross.

There is a tremendous contrast expressed in verses twelve and thirteen. The blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of an heifer sprinkled upon one who was ceremonially unclean and thus deprived of social privileges could sanctify only by purging or purifying the flesh, the outward man. "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" The blood of Christ was not like the blood of animals. Their blood could be sprinkled only upon the flesh of man. Its application was external and could not affect eternal values. But the blood of Jesus reaches to the core of human problems by reaching to the heart of man. "Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water" (Heb. 10:22).

We are coming to realize more and more the effect of guilt-consciousness upon human personality. As a rational being man must possess the faculty of memory, but this faculty in a responsible being forces him to recall his evil as well as his good, and leaves him with the threat of punishment hanging over his head. Man cannot undo his deeds regardless of how remorseful they may leave him.

Under the previous economy the constant offering of

sacrifices served only as a reminder of sin. When Christ came he offered himself once for all time. Those who trust in his blood recognize its efficacy. They need retain no further consciousness of forgiven sins. The record says, 'We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." This great truth lends importance to the declaration immediately following: "And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices which can never take away sins, but this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."

We should not be misled by the word "perfected." This does not mean that those who are sanctified have been brought to a state where they are impervious to temptation and are sinlessly perfect. The word means "complete" and the context is dealing with consciousness of sins committed in the past. The blood of Jesus is so potent that it not only removes the stain but also the shadow of guilt and leaves the sinner with a sense of inward cleansing and purity. The blood of Jesus purifies, reconciles and sanctifies us.

The next time you join in singing "There's Power in the Blood" you can do so with the full assurance that you are singing the truth.

The Greatest Counterfeiter

Contents

Not long ago I saw an interesting display of money. There was currency of almost every denomination, but it was worthless. The exhibit had been prepared by one of our government agencies for the purpose of informing the public to be on the alert against counterfeiters. Our legal tender is issued by proper authority and those who seek to duplicate it undermine that authority. In addition to making victims of their unsuspecting dupes they weaken the fiscal structure of our nation and if they were allowed to operate unchecked they would eventually destroy our financial integrity and create panic and chaos. It is a well known fact that when nations are at war they frequently attempt to flood the other country with counterfeit money and thus produce a state of disruption.

A counterfeiter is defined as "one who makes an imitation of something genuine with intent to deceive." It is not merely the making of an imitation but the motive for doing so that makes one a counterfeiter within the scope of the law. Please remember this fact as I talk with you about the greatest counterfeiter in the world. I am not the least hesitant in applying the term "greatest" to this personage because he is clever, persistent and diabolical. This last word is actually a transliteration of one of his Greek titles for I am speaking of the devil. Unquestionably, he has deceived more people in the world than anyone else.

You may be surprised that I speak of Satan as a person. It is no longer considered a special indication of intellectual

brilliance to do so. Not long ago a prominent clergyman suggested that we should delete from the Bible every reference which seems to indicate that Satan is a personal being. He thought we should substitute some such expression as "evil force." This is a good sample of the kind of muddled thinking to which our modern age is subjected. In its final analysis, and traced back to its absolute source, all power and force is personal. One of the most effective bits of deception the devil has ever pulled is to convince men that he does not exist. He has perfected the art of camouflage until men think he is not there at the very time he is pursuing his work of deception.

The writers of the Bible had no doubt about the personality of the devil. Peter wrote, "Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" (1 Peter 5:8). Peter had encountered the devil because Jesus had told him that Satan desired to have him to sift him as wheat. He also knew what Satan could do to men and women when he filled their hearts to lie, as he did in the case of Ananias and Sapphira.

Paul knew the devil existed and wrote to "keep Satan from gaining advantage over us; for we are not ignorant of his designs" (2 Cor. 2:11). It is apparent that a great many today are ignorant of the devices and stratagems which Satan employs and he easily gains an advantage over them by his operations. It will help us to realize that one of his most effective methods has been that of counterfeiting. Whatever God has done, Satan has sought to create chaos and confusion by duplicating it without authority. Let us consider the areas in which he has offered substitutes.

1. GOD

The central fact of the old covenant is expressed in what has been called "the watchword of Israel." It declares that "The Lord our God is one God and beside him there is no other." The

very foundation of that covenant is found in the first two commandments of the Decalogue. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," and "Thou shalt not make unto thyself a graven image." Satan infiltrated society with polytheism and men soon worshiped gods of three kinds— natural, artificial and imaginary. Even the covenant people were rebuked by Moses in the stirring words, "They stirred him to jealousy with strange gods; with abominable practices they provoked him to anger. They sacrificed to demons which were no gods, to gods they had never known, to new gods that had come in of late, whom your fathers had never dreaded. You were unmindful of the Rock that begot you, and you forgot the God who gave you birth" (Deut. 32:16-18).

Belief in the Bible leads one to accept as factual that God made man in his own image; whereas idolatry promotes the belief that man can make a god in his own image. The frightful consequences attendant upon "exchanging the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man or birds or animals or reptiles" can be read upon the pages of both the revelation of God and the history of the nations. In spite of the fact that Satan corrupted the power structure of the universe, the very existence of idols is a testimony to the one God. There can be no counterfeit which is not preceded by the genuine!

2. PROPHETS

God chose to make his will known in previous ages through prophets. "In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets" (Heb. 1:1). "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21). "From the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt unto this day, I have persistently sent all my servants the prophets to them, day after day" (Jer. 7:25).

Satan lost no time in creating false prophets to go forth and contradict the faithful. These appeared in innocent guise for purpose of deception. So Jesus warned, "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves" (Matt. 7:15). These men not only came while Jesus was on earth but in previous ages, for he says, "Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets" (Luke 6:26). They were also to come after Jesus, because he warns, "And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And because wickedness is multiplied most men's love will wax cold" (Matt. 24:11, 12).

That such prophets did come is evident from the statement of John many years later. "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are of God; for many false prophets have gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1).

3. CHRIST

When God sent his Son into the earth he announced that his name would be Jesus, which means Saviour. It was revealed that Jesus was the Messiah for whom the Jews had long been looking. Satan not only stirred up their hearts to deny him but further complicated the situation in their days of anxiety and expectancy by sending others who professed to be the Messiah and pretended to perform miracles. Jesus warned of such pseudo-Messiahs in two memorable passages in Matthew 24.

"Take heed that no one leads you astray. For many will come in my name, saying 'I am the Christ,' and they will lead many astray" (verse 5). "Then if anyone says to you, 'Lo, here is the Christ!' or 'There he is!' do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders so as to lead astray, if possible, the very elect" (verses 23, 24). These passages inform us of the multiplicity of counterfeit Christs and of their widespread influence. They also tell us of the

effectiveness of the methods they employed.

One needs only to read the works of Flavius Josephus who was born about the time that Saul of Tarsus was converted to realize how accurate was the prediction of Jesus. Lack of time will not permit us to detail the stories of the various false messiahs. We must content ourselves with a reference to Bar Cochba who led an insurrection just a century after the death of Jesus.

Most of us are quite familiar with the discovery of the Qumran community and the "Dead Sea Scrolls," the first of which came to light in March, 1947. Many of us may not know that, in the eagerness to investigate the area, other important finds have been made in the Judean wilderness. In 1952, about a dozen miles south of the site of Qumran, two letters written by the leader of the second Jewish revolt of A.D. 132-135 were located. These revealed that his real name was Simon ben Kosebah. In 1959 a bundle of papyri was discovered and upon being unwrapped was found to contain additional letters of Bar Cochba to two of his officers, Jehonathan and Masabala. This sparked a renewed study of the times and efforts of one who was widely hailed at first as "the Messiah."

From the times of Porcius Festus, the simmering hatred of the Jews in Palestine grew more intense, boiling up in the days of his successor to the procuratorship, Albinus, and boiling over in the days of the next official, Gessius Florus (A.D. 64-66). Florus tried to quell the revolt and the Roman legate in Syria sent his militia to aid. The Jews, fighting with almost insane fury, drove them back and occupied most of the garrisons constructed by Herod the Great. Nero sent his general, Vespasian, to direct the fight and by A.D. 68 he had subjugated almost all of Palestine except the area about Jerusalem. At this time Nero died and Vespasian returned to Rome to be declared emperor by the military forces. In A.D. 70 he sent his son, Titus, to complete the task, which he did by razing Jerusalem to the ground.

It was during these conflicts that the exclusive community of the sect of the Essenes, which had been established in the hills near the Dead Sea, was destroyed. The panic attending the approach of the Roman legions caused the faithful guardians of the community archives to conceal their documents in the caves of the vicinity, and here they were discovered by sheer accident in the spring of 1947.

Soon after the death of the last apostle of our Lord, a revival of hope began to be whispered among the Jews all over the world. Rabbis became infected with the belief that the Messiah was coming to recapture the holy land and restore Judaism as the principle of righteousness in the earth. Imbued by longing, and with hearts aflame, the Jews of the Dispersion arose against their overlords in A.D. 115 during the reign of Trajan. The revolt was quelled with inordinate cruelty and bloodshed. It burst into flame again in Palestine in A.D. 132.

The emperor Hadrian issued a decree forbidding the practice of circumcision and observation of the sabbath. A temple dedicated to Jupiter was erected on the site of the Temple in Jerusalem. In A.D. 132 Ben Kosebah, known as Bar Cochba, a name meaning "Son of the Star," proclaimed himself to be the Messiah and professed to have the power to work miracles. Even the famed Rabbi Akiba was deceived and acknowledged the impostor to be the Messiah of the prophets. Under his leadership the city of Jerusalem was recaptured and the Jews, under the mistaken idea that the reign of the Messiah was imminent, fought with blind passion for three long years. Finally, in A.D. 135 Bar Cochba was killed in the capture of his last stronghold at Bethar. Tens of thousands of Jews perished. Palestine was reduced to a desert waste. The city of Jerusalem was rebuilt as a pagan metropolis under the name Aelia Capitolina. Only Satan profited by the cruel counterfeit.

4. APOSTLES

Jesus chose certain men to be apostles or envoys to an alien world. These he qualified and commissioned and sent forth with the good news. They were designated as holy apostles (Eph. 3:5). Immediately the devil began his work of duplication of the method adopted by our Lord. He sought to overthrow the work of the apostles by denying the authority of one of them (Paul) and by creating false apostles to deny the truth. These men, operating under a disguise, claimed to work on the same basis as the real apostles.

Paul writes to them, "And what I do I will continue to do, in order to undermine the claim of those who would like to claim that in their boasted mission they work on the same terms as we do. For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is not strange if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds" (2 Cor. 11:12-15).

Even more revealing is the translation by J. B. Phillips. "They are counterfeits of the real thing, dishonest practitioners, 'God's messengers' only by their own appointment. Nor do their tactics surprise me when I consider how Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light." This will serve to explain the statement in the letter to Ephesus, "You cannot bear evil men but have tested those who call themselves apostles but are not, and found them to be false" (Rev. 2:2).

5. TEACHERS

The apostle declares that "God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers," etc. Thus, in the congregation at Antioch "there were certain prophets and teachers" (Acts 13:1). Because of the activity of Satan in this particular field a warning was necessary. "But false prophets

also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction" (2 Peter 2:1).

6. LETTERS

Because the apostles could not continue indefinitely on earth, the message which they transmitted orally was committed to writing in order to preserve it. Moreover, the congregations, required communications to correct disorders, instruct more fully, and encourage a more fervent spirit in the work of the Lord. Thus Paul writes, "So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by letter" (2 Thess. 2:15).

This provided Satan an opportunity to create forged documents and circulate them as being genuine. In the same chapter from which we have just quoted, the apostle wrote to the brethren not to become "excited, either by spirit or by word, or by letter purporting to be from us" (verse 2). To give the saints a means of identifying the genuine letters, he concludes, "I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. This is the mark in every letter of mine; it is the way I write" (2 Thess. 3:17).

We do not have forged letters from the days of the apostles but there are epistles which date back to the early centuries and which were circulated as the writings of Paul. There is a fake epistle to the Corinthians, another to the Laodiceans, and six letters to Seneca. It is obvious that these are all forgeries and they demonstrate the length to which the great counterfeiter will go.

7. MIRACLES

The only authentic credentials for one who claims to be

supernaturally sent is to demonstrate supernatural powers. In conformity to the laws of evidence and credibility, our Lord arranged for his ambassadors to confirm the truth of their declaration and to create faith in the testimony by miracles. Paul said, "My speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and power" (1 Cor. 2:4). Of the salvation afforded by the gospel it is said, "It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard him, while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his own will" (Heb. 2:3, 4).

Again we read in John 20:30, 31, "Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name." To defeat the purpose of God, Satan also engaged in the performance of fake miracles. "The coming of the lawless one by the activity of Satan will be with all power and with pretended signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who are to perish, because they refused to love the truth and to be saved" (2 Thess. 2:9, 10). "Then I saw another beast . . . it works great signs, even making fire come down from heaven in the sight of men; and by the signs which it is allowed to work in the presence of the beast, it deceives those who dwell on the earth, bidding them make an image for the beast which was wounded by the sword and yet lived" (Rev. 13:13, 14).

8. CHURCH

The word "church" was selected by the translators of the King James Version to represent the Greek *ekklesia*, which literally means "called out." The church is a divine creation and a living organism. It is composed of every person on earth who has been "called out of darkness into his marvelous light." Every

saved person in the world is in the church. The Bible teaches that there is one church, the body of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not composed of denominations or of congregations, but of individuals. "Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it" (1 Cor. 12:27).

Nothing has created more confusion than the idea that there are many "churches" and that "one church is as good as another." In the first place, what are generally called "churches" are simply *parties*. These have grown up around crystallized opinions, interpretations and religious philosophies of men. They have served to divide God's children into rival, and often warring tribes and camps. Families have been split and riven asunder. Communities have been torn and rent by those who profess to follow the Prince of Peace. The resultant strife has discouraged many and disgusted others.

Division among the believers has been one of the most potent weapons in the arsenal of Satan. It is like poison in the blood stream of the spiritual body, paralyzing and deadly in its effect. The great "accuser of the brethren" realizes that if the people of God ever unite so they can bring the full strength of a unified front to bear upon his hosts that they must retire in abject defeat. "God is not the author of confusion but of peace" (1 Cor. 14:33).

SIN OF SUBSTITUTION

The great counterfeiter is a master of the art of substitution and transplantation. He realizes full well what consternation and confusion results when men get their values mixed. It is somewhat like keeping the coffee in the sugar container, the sugar in the salt container, the salt in the flour container and the flour in the coffee can. Under such circumstances one never knows if he will have salt in his coffee or sugar in his flour.

God does not want his people to be in a messed-up mix or a mixed-up mess. The prophet says, "Woe to them who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter" (Isaiah 5:20). Observe that two things are condemned. One is *calling* something that which it is not, the other is *putting* something in place of another thing and palming it off as that thing. The Pure Food Administration is interested in the labels attached to products. A constant survey is made with a view to provide for honest packaging. You can be sure that Satan will not abide by God's spiritual "food and drug act." He will deceive when possible.

Our enemy is constantly at work seeking to improve upon his "engraving process" so the spurious will look more like the real and thus deceive the greater number. It is a matter of constant education by our federal officers that the best way to avoid being duped by counterfeiters is to be thoroughly familiar with the marks of the genuine currency. They urge all of us to know what real money actually looks like. In the realm of the spirit the same thing is true. It is because of the ignorance and indifference of the masses that Satan has a "field day" in his deceptive work.

The prophet Hosea, surveying the ruin of God's people in his day, wrote thus, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (4:6). The wisest monarch who ever sat upon an earthly throne said, "By knowledge the righteous are delivered" (Prov. 11:9). He also declared, "Knowledge is easy for a man of understanding" (Prov. 14:6). I think the reason for this is that one who has understanding will seek to know. He will apply himself and diligently attempt to improve his state. When everyone is thoroughly aware of the will and revelation of God, Satan will have a difficult time palming off his delusions.

It is not necessary to know all of the errors of our present age. One could not live long enough to read all the books of false

philosophy and mark the errors they contain. Our hope of heaven is not contingent upon our knowledge of all the mistaken ideas extant but upon our knowledge of the truth and our willingness to walk in the way. In the days of the Mississippi steamboats a nervous woman passenger approached the captain in the pilot house and asked, "Do you know where all the sandbars, snags, shoals and rocks are located?" The pilot answered her in the negative and informed her that no one knew where they all were. The woman said, "Then we have no hope of reaching our destination and avoiding a wreck." "Not at all," the captain replied, "You see, I do know where the channel is."

I suspect that all of us have read the book by Daniel Defoe in which he describes the experience of Robinson Crusoe. Few who have read it know the real purpose of the author in writing it. Deeply opposed to clericalism and the established church, he wrote to prove that our relationship to God was upon an individual basis and even a person on a desert isle could be faithful to God. The humble savage, Friday, rescued from cannibals, was introduced to show that the gospel was for all. The book strikes a blow against racial prejudice. Go back and read it again and mark those passages in which Robinson Crusoe expresses faith in God, and it will be an interesting piece of research for you.

Defoe also wrote another book entitled "The History of the Devil." In it he disagrees with some of the conclusions of the great Puritan poet, John Milton, as given in "Paradise Lost," but this is not the real purpose of the personal "history." He designed to outline the means by which Satan had pursued his course through the centuries. One of the effective methods was the "sowing of discord among brethren." This, you will recall, is labeled as an abomination unto God.

Speaking of the rise of the papal system and the ordaining of Boniface as the first pope, Defoe says, "Since the conquest over Eve in Paradise, by which death and the Devil, hand in

hand, established their first empire upon earth, the Devil never gained a more important point than he gained at this time." He continues, "He had indeed prospered in his affairs tolerably well for some time before this, and his interest among the clergy had got ground for some ages; but that was indeed a secret management, was carried on privately, and with difficulty; as in sowing discord and faction among the people, perplexing the council of their princes, and secretly wheedling in with their dignified clergy. Also he raised abundance of little church rebellions, by setting up heretics of various kinds."

The gist of the whole thing is that Satan so confused the state of religion that the world was in a turmoil. Under these circumstances he convinced men that the only hope of the survival of truth was to elevate a man to a place of undisputed authority, grant him infallibility, and thus assure that any errors which he labeled truth would be perpetuated through the ages. Those who opposed such errors would then be regarded as fighting against God. Thus provision was made for the destruction of all who contended for righteousness.

Let no one doubt that we are pitted against a cunning foe. When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, Satan moved the murderous heart of Herod in an attempt to kill the helpless babe. When Jesus was immersed in the Jordan, Satan lost no time in meeting him in the wilderness. Here he used the most glittering enticement to seduce the Son of God to forsake his mission. Failing in every attempt, he sought to counterfeit the crucifixion by putting two other crosses on Golgotha at the same time Jesus died, thus making it appear that he was merely one of several criminals who died upon that occasion.

When Jesus was placed in the tomb all was in readiness for the final great test. If death proved to be too powerful and could not be forced to release him all was lost. If the jaws which swallowed his body could not be pried apart the hopes of the world would turn to ashes. It was for this very occasion that

Jesus had become clothed in human flesh. This was the inevitable moment toward which his whole earthly career and the purpose eternal had relentlessly driven him. "Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise took part of the same nature, that through death he might destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage" (Heb. 2:14, 15).

It is because of the glorious triumph of the resurrection over the "prince of the power of the air" that this became the theme of the early saints. The great counterfeiter was met upon his chosen field of battle which he had prepared through the generations. He was handed his favorite weapon— death. But that very weapon was turned against him and his stranglehold upon humanity was broken forever. "That through death he might destroy him who has the power of death."

Today we know that we face an inveterate, but not an invincible enemy, a foe who can fight but cannot frighten those who trust in the Lord Jesus. The keys of death and hell were wrested from the grasp of their proud owner. They are now in possession of the risen Saviour. "Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one; I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades" (Rev. 1:17, 18). We have not yet gained the final victory but Jesus has. Victory in Jesus! He is the person and the place of our victory!

"I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me: Write, blessed are the dead who die in the Lord." You cannot die in the Lord unless you live in the Lord and you cannot live in the Lord unless you get into the Lord. The most important thing in the world is *where you are*. If you are not in Christ you are in danger! You will have to choose whether you will be safe or sorry. Do not be gullible. Do not be taken in by the greatest counterfeiter in the world!

HEAVEN HELP US
(*The Holy Spirit in Your Life*)

by W. Carl Ketcherside

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HEAVEN HELP US

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Preface

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A flood of books dealing with the Holy Spirit has been pouring from the presses. The emptiness of modern man, coupled with a sense of the futility of earthly existence in a nuclear age, has combined to promote a genuine interest in a Power that can transform life and provide hope of human relationship with the ultimate and infinite. As is true in every age of crisis, much of the appeal to the sensational and emotional is provided purely for the enrichment of the authors.

But many good things of lasting value are being said and written. Further, it is time for men to seek a greater understanding of the will of God and to come to a closer walk with Him through the Spirit. In many respects this volume is different from other such books on this theme now on the market. It is not intended to encourage men to think of the Spirit as a gimmick or fad. It is not the result of a current wave of interest, but it was planned many years ago.

The purpose of the book is to stimulate thought and promote a deeper study of the revealed will of God. I believe that God has spoken, and the revelation of what He has said is contained in the Bible. It is not my intention to be judgmental about the personal experiences to which men and women testify, but I hold that experiences must be judged in the light of the Scriptures, and not the reverse.

The Holy Spirit is not the Word of God; He is the divine

agent through whom that Word was conveyed to human agents. The Spirit did not simply deliver the Word and then retire from the scene, however. He took up His abode in the hearts of men to strengthen, aid, and comfort them, in the fulfillment of the divine purpose for their lives. Because of this, this book first identifies the Spirit and then details in practical fashion how He helps us harmonize our lives with the divine will.

The final chapter makes use of material originally written for a journal. It appears in this volume to give it wider circulation and to induce a greater impact upon the lives of those who read it. But simply reading about the Spirit will not enable one to achieve the joy that should be the lot of the redeemed. One can starve to death while studying a cookbook. The Spirit must be allowed to motivate, quicken, and stimulate.

If this little volume leads you into a life of sharing with the Father and all the other members of His family— our brothers and sisters; if it brings freedom from fear of the present; and if it strengthens your faith, it will have achieved its goal and God will be praised.

For the most part, Scripture quotations are from the *Revised Standard Version Bible*, **copyright 1946, 1952, and © 1971, by the Division of Christian Education, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., and used by permission. The following abbreviations are used when other versions are quoted: KJV, King James Version; TNEB, The New English Bible.**

— W. Carl Ketcherside

The Holy Spirit— Who or What?

Contents

Many years ago I attended a Bible-school class in a village church in the heart of the Missouri Ozarks. I was in the region on a bass fishing expedition, and, as my custom was, I attended the services on Sunday morning. I sat in the adult class taught by a local farmer who seemed to be quite knowledgeable about the Bible. His occasional quaint comments made the lesson especially interesting for me.

I surmised, from the discussion by members of the class, that the little town was in a dither because of claims being made by a "faith healer" who was holding forth nightly in the rather decrepit tent. Finally, one man asked, "Well, just what is the Holy Spirit, anyhow? I've heard about it all my life and no one has ever rightly told me what it is." The teacher waited, with a slight smile on his face, until the questioner had finished. Then, holding his well-worn Bible slightly aloft, and waving it for emphasis, he replied, "This Book is the Holy Spirit, and all the Holy Spirit there is. When I have it in my overcoat pocket, the Holy Spirit is in my pocket. The Holy Spirit is the Word of God, and that's what this Book is, the Word of God, and the Holy Spirit."

He looked around the class to see if there were any challengers, but found none. Apparently they had too many burdens to bear in farming their rocky land, in trying to wrest a living from their thin soil, to give much attention to the identity of the Spirit. They were content to leave such questions to the

teacher whose respect for the Book caused him to read its pages each night in the soft glow cast by his Aladdin lamp. And since no further questions were forthcoming, the teacher sought to clinch his argument by saying, "Jesus himself said, 'It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life' (John 6:63; KJV). There it is, as plain as the nose on your face."

I could not be satisfied with the quick response to the tremendous question, "What is the Holy Spirit, anyhow?" Somehow, I was convinced that the quotation drawn from the words of Jesus did not furnish an adequate answer. Although I knew little about the Spirit of God, I had a vague uneasiness at the thought that He could be captured, caught up, and confined to pages bound in black leather, stamped in gold, and crammed into an overcoat pocket. After I retired to my tent, I lay awake pondering a question for which my meager knowledge had no solution. Before I dozed off I made a pledge to learn all I could about the functions assigned to the Spirit. Through the years I have learned much, not the least of which is that almost from the time Jesus promised that the Spirit would come, much confusion has existed about His nature and identity.

I recall talking far into the night with a professor of philosophy in a state university. He had been reared by parents devoted to the Word of God, but during his academic career his own faith had been eroded. This left deep furrows in his intellectual life where the rich topsoil of belief had been washed away by the constant rain of skepticism. He flattered himself that he still maintained faith, but as we conversed it became apparent that his faith was in his own righteousness and in "the wisdom of this passing age" upon which he relied.

"What do you think about the Holy Spirit?" I asked. He looked at me for a minute before he replied. "I believe in a holy spirit, I suppose," he said, "but I do not believe in anything called the Holy Spirit." He gave a lengthy dissertation in

scholastic jargon. The gist was that men assign different values to the word "holy," meaning only what each man makes it mean.

He finally explained he thought that the Holy Spirit was merely one's own spirit, his inner self, committed to unselfish sharing with others. It was self, devoted to relieving conditions that affected the social structure for evil, consecrated to working with and through nature for the betterment of all. Pinned down, he confessed that he was a humanist, and the expression "Holy Spirit" was merely a catchword, a handle with which to turn off religious discussion. The Holy Spirit no longer had any real relevance for him.

Then there was the wealthy manufacturer who invited me to his palatial home to talk about his idea of God and the created universe. In his voluminous library we sat down to canvass the thinking of each other. He proved to be a mystic and a student of esoteric religions. His idea of the Holy Spirit was that of a nebulous, pervasive influence, which invaded all religion and led men to a higher degree of achievement through art forms and literary productions. He regarded the Bible as inspired, but only as he thought the works of Rembrandt, Titian, or Shakespeare were inspired. The Holy Spirit was the rarefied atmosphere breathed by the gifted, the composite influence derived from heredity, training, and fellowship with others. He thought the tendency was ever upward and onward. He fully expected that this certain but subtle influence would so affect the world that someday men would become more god-like, and sorrow and suffering would be conquered and pass away. The world would be saved by its art and literature.

My affluent friend regaled me with various quotations from eminent philosophers, but the widely divergent views caused me to explore my favorite field, history, to see if the same kind of confusion existed in earlier times among those who professed to be believers in Christ. I was not too greatly surprised to find that such was the case. I should like to share

with you a few highlights of this research.

If you are inclined to think that the contemporary problems of the Christian world are multitudinous, you need only to read the account of conditions in the first four centuries to realize that by comparison we are in relatively calm waters. That "the Way" has survived at all is a testimony to God's providential care and concern. Whereas many of our debates are about peripheral matters, those of which we speak struck at the very nature of the Godhead. The real questions were related to the identity of Jesus, but these resolved into disputes about the Holy Spirit as well. Here are some of the reasons for controversies that divided and fragmented the primitive believers:

First, the gospel was taken to the Jews, and the original community of saints was composed of Jews and proselytes. To many Jews it appeared, and still does, that disciples of Jesus were affirming the existence of three deities, and since they measured all teaching by the revelation of God in the *Torah* and *Hafterah*, the Law and the Prophets, they had to rationalize the subordination of the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The problem was intensified with the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., and the consequent scattering of the Jewish community of believers. Gradually the members who were dispersed drifted into a denial of the divinity of Jesus. They regarded only the Gospel according to Matthew as valid and they considered Paul an apostate. Since they proscribed all of his epistles, they could not use them as source materials with reference to the Spirit. Eventually they came to regard Jesus as a creation of God and the Spirit as a creation of Jesus. The Spirit thus became a son of Jesus as Jesus was a son of God which is the equivalent of saying that the Spirit was God's grandson.

Second, the term for spirit originally meant "breath" or "wind." This is true in Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and even in

Anglo-Saxon. In Hebrew the original is *ruach*, in Greek *pneuma*, in Latin *spiritus*, and in English, *ghost*. In every instance the original means "blow" or "breath." For this reason, many believers in the early centuries of the faith came to think of the Spirit as merely an impersonal force, with no more consciousness than the wind or breath. Certain expressions in the divine revelation seemed to lend force to their deduction. John records an incident after the resurrection when Jesus suddenly stood among the disciples and invoked peace upon them. "And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit'" (John 20:22; RSV). The conclusion was that the Spirit was merely the breath of God.

When the apostles were present on the Day of Pentecost, awaiting the overwhelming of the Spirit as promised, "suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting" (Acts 2:2). No wind filled the house. The sound was like the noise of a gale, and since "they were all filled with the Holy Spirit," it was an easy matter to think of wind and Spirit as interchangeable.

The early disciples, however, like many of the cultists in our own day, overlooked certain facts about language. They were trapped into trying to fit every use of the word for Spirit into their own little traditional cubicles. Language is like the persons who employ it for communication. It is not static. It is constantly growing and changing. It tends always to expand and become broader in scope. One can no more force acquired usage into primitive root meanings than he can, in his maturity, force his body into the trousers he wore to kindergarten.

Thus the versatile Greeks extended the word *pneuma* beyond its basic meaning of a movement of air, or the breath of the nostrils, to the vital principle by which the body is animated. From that they went on, through a logical sequence, to the rational spirit, the power by which a human being thinks, feels, wills, and decides. Eventually, the spirit in man came to be

recognized as that part of man which is rational, giving him the power to perceive and grasp divine things, so that the Spirit of God can exert an influence upon him.

At this point I suggest that the serious student can avail himself of what is commonly referred to in our day as Thayer's *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament***. The foregoing definition was adapted from it. Actually, this helpful volume was not produced by Joseph Thayer, but by C. L. Willibald Grimm, an Austrian who expanded and improved upon a work by C. G. Wilke. Thayer translated it into English and made some revision. This is mentioned because Dr. Grimm, in his** *Prospectus***, announced that one of his purposes was "to exhibit the historical growth of a word's significance and accordingly in selecting vouchers for New Testament usage to show at what time and in what class of writers a given word became current."**[1]

My goal is not to produce a volume for advanced scholars. It is to share insights with those who love the Lord and the written Word, whose opportunity for research is limited both by lack of time and the need for making a living. I have written this because of the imposition of certain cultists who disturb the minds of the unlearned by insisting that, since the root meaning of "spirit" is wind or breath, when a man ceases to breathe the spirit ceases to exist. This conclusion I deem to be neither Scriptural nor sensible.

Again, I am indebted to the lexicographer mentioned above for pointing out Martin Luther's statement that the *pneuma* **is "the highest and noblest part of man, which qualifies him to lay hold of the incomprehensible, invisible, eternal things; in short, it is the house where Faith and God's Word are at home."**[2]

A third and fruitful source of conflict and confusion about the Spirit has been the rise of cult leaders who projected false opinions, causing millions to be misled and to follow in their

wake. Some of these were sincere but self-deceived, while others were simply deceivers motivated by their own ambition. It was not always easy to distinguish the class in which each one belonged, but the damage done by the schismatic teaching was generally the same.

It is axiomatic that like causes produce like results. This is as true in the religious realm as in any other. In times of ferment and social upheaval, when "the hearts of men fail them for fear," an element of mysticism takes over, and out of this is spawned a kind of fanaticism, which grasps at strange and bizarre doctrines for a ray of hope. An outstanding example of this occurred about the middle of the second century, perhaps in the decade following A.D. 160. In Phrygia, the worship of the goddess Cybele was predominant. This female deity was regarded as the earth-mother and the source of all life. Her priests, called Corybantes, led in the worship, which was frenzied and orgiastic, generally conducted in sylvan glades or in the depths of dark forests.

One of these priests, Montanus, became a convert to Christianity. He sought to inject into Christianity the same excitability and emotional excess that had accompanied his pagan ministrations. He imagined and announced that he was the Paraclete, the "other Comforter" whom Jesus had promised to send to earth upon His return to glory. Montanus was subject to raptures during which, according to his testimony, the divine took over in his life, and used his tongue to utter enigmatic and mystic expressions, which were interpreted as messages of Heaven to the saints.

Montanus declared that the return of Christ was imminent and would occur during the lifetime of those present. His coming would usher in a thousand years' reign, a millennium in which the Lord would personally rule over the earth and straighten out the tangled state into which sin had plunged the universe. In preparation for this, Montanus called upon the believers to

exercise rigid discipline over themselves and to redouble their efforts to convert mankind. Frequent fasts were imposed; celibacy was recommended; and second marriages were unconditionally forbidden. Mortification of the body was enjoined, and the unkempt appearance with tattered garments was encouraged as a sign of humility and self-denial in preparation for the end of the existing order.

Two women, Priscilla and Maximilla, also visionaries, were proclaimed to be prophetesses. They traveled with Montanus as "companions of the Paraclete." They also were preoccupied with the thought of the last days. Epiphanius has preserved a statement of Maximilla to the effect that, "After me there will not again be a prophetess, but the end will come." Priscilla claimed to have seen the Lord himself. She testified that He appeared in the form of a woman attired in shining garb, to inform her that the New Jerusalem would soon descend from Heaven and settle upon the earth at Pepuza, in Asia Minor.

I beg the kind indulgence of my readers for inserting here what may appear to be a too lengthy statement from the book, *The Early Church*, written by David Duff, an eminent professor of church history in Edinburgh, Scotland. The following quotation points up those conditions which seem to bring to the forefront mere human beings who imagine that they are either the Holy Spirit, or His authorized spokesmen:

> **Montanism had something of the character of a revival. It was the first reaction, while the Church was still young, against a widespread lukewarmness and worldliness, and especially against the slothful, if not the scoffing spirit of the multitude of believers who no longer cherished the lively expectation of the *parousia* of Christ, which had been so general in the first days, but said, "The Lord delayeth His coming," forgetting that one day with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. It is not wonderful that, in these circumstances, many should be dissatisfied with themselves, dissatisfied**

> **with the Church, dissatisfied with the episcopal rulers, who were now consolidating their power. But here were enthusiasts, who sought not only to recall the lost ideal, but, in view of the approaching end, and under the inspiration of the Paraclete, to make Christianity holier and purer than in the days of the apostles. Their ecstasies, their zeal, their rigorism, and even their spiritual pride, were fitted to gain them adherents far and wide, and possibly the fear of those Gnostic speculations by which the objective truths of Christianity were subverted had a powerful influence with not a few, and induced them to embrace or favor a system in which the objectivity of Christianity, and particularly the doctrine of the *parousia*, was made to absorb the thought and energy of the individual.[3]**

The persistent student of church history will soon become aware that at intervals there is a recurrence of almost universal concern with the Holy Spirit and His activity on the contemporary scene. When the religious structures become solidified and those who maintain them become adamant, when worldliness and apathy rule the lives of the membership, those whose deep emotional needs are not being met seek a closer walk with God, and a visible manifestation of the presence of the Spirit. It is easier to walk by sight in a world of fear and trepidation than to walk by faith.

In every such period men like Montanus arise, and if they do not, as he did, claim to be the Holy Spirit personified, they do profess to be His Vicars. They produce prophecies that the uninitiated are expected to receive unquestioningly, under threat of damnation for refusal. Repeatedly there has been a reaffirmation that the last days are at hand. When the world becomes so complex and confused that men can find no solution in social experiments and political expediencies, they turn toward God.

As it is with so many other things in human life, there are

both good and bad features involved in such a cyclical process. It is good that men are brought to a realization of the need of God's influence in human affairs, and good that the power and impact of the Holy Spirit are once more affirmed. It is regrettable that the daily and constant concern of God for mankind is so soon forgotten after the excitement and agitation have died away. It is also a tragedy that many historians, aware of the predictions, which never come to pass, conclude that the whole Christian fabric has been woven from the overheated imaginations of men without real basis in fact. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Because Jesus has not returned at the time appointed by men does not mean that He will not return at the time appointed by the Father.

It will be helpful, I think, to study carefully the words of a German historian and analyst, K. R. Hagenbach, who in about 1850 wrote the following:

> **Has not at all times a rigid way of life, especially when it arms itself with a prophetic, enthusiastic speech, and turns itself against the existing order of things, produced a mighty impression on the multitude? To observe with all wisdom and patience the quiet course of God in history, and to follow its traces even where the natural eye perceives only a natural succession of events, belongs only to the man who has been exercised and trained in spiritual things. The mass loves the astounding, the thoroughgoing, the uncompromising; and hence the extraordinary outpourings, the improvised prophecies, of a heated and extravagant imagination, supported by an energetic will, have ever imposed more on the rude mind than the harmonious exhibition of a calm and simple piety. Montanism is not an isolated phenomenon. Distrust of science, contempt for heathen literature, hostility to art and culture, a bold disregard of established social relations and forms, a rough exterior, a constant prominence given to repentance, coupled with predictions of fearful judgments— such marks the Montanists have in common not only with the different sects of the Middle Ages, and**

> **the Anabaptists of the age of the Reformation, but more or less, with the Puritans of England and the Camisards of France, and the many "awakened" (so-called) of more recent and most recent times.[4]**

The validity of the thesis of Hagenbach is established by the fact that it might have been written within our own generation without changing a word or sentence. It would be surprisingly easy to show the various periods to which he alludes that men have been carried away on a wave of enthusiasm, repetitious of other such occasions produced by the state of the world in previous times. This procedure, however, would be only incidental to our real purpose at present and we must postpone it until a more propitious season.

Let me then summarize what I have said. I have asserted that the present confusion about the Holy Spirit is not a unique phenomenon. Much misunderstanding about the nature, essence, and work of the Spirit has characterized every age. I have sought to show that some of the perplexity has originated in an ignorance of the Godhead, and the conjecture that an admission of the personality of the Spirit would demand an assumption that there existed a plurality of Gods.

Again, I have shown that uncertainty has arisen because of the etymology of *spirit*, and the failure to recognize that words, as do trees, grow from roots, and that such growth necessitates change. One can no more develop a language by insisting that root meanings must remain static than he can produce fruit by cutting off every shoot that springs above the surface of the soil from the roots below.

I have also given proof that professed teachers have deceived the multitudes through the centuries, either by alleging that they were the Spirit incarnated, or by claiming to be special functionaries of the Spirit, with new and fanciful revelations that appealed to the credulous.

It is now time to turn from this avenue of approach to study and analyze the teachings of the Scriptures with reference to the identity of the Holy Spirit. As we do this it will be necessary to avoid the dogmatic and authoritarian attitude. In a spirit of sharing let us turn to a continued investigation of the nature of the profound relationship between the Holy Spirit and the human spirit. Surely no greater theme than this can challenge the intellect.

Is the Spirit the Word?

Contents

Is the Holy Spirit the Word of God? Is the Spirit a pervasive influence of righteousness, or the spirit of man consecrated to a service to humanity, simply because "holy is as holy does"? The only source from which to obtain an answer to these questions is the revelation of God. Revelation, from the Greek *apokalupsis*, means laying bare, making naked, or uncovering. It relates to God's unveiling that which otherwise must remain a mystery to man.

There is a sphere beyond the ability of man's intellect to probe and penetrate. Being finite, man is circumscribed in the range of knowledge to what he can apprehend by his senses and to what he can deduct by rational thought processes. By memory he can recall the past, and by imagination he can project himself into the realm of fantasy, but he cannot know divine thought without divine revelation.

One who postulates that man is the creation of an intelligent Being will accept as a corollary that such a Creator will communicate to His creation. Thus, the fact of revelation is substantiated by the nature of God and man, since only God can supply the need of man for that knowledge which is beyond his grasp.

The apostle Paul declares that what could not be ascertained by the eye, or learned by hearing or rational perception, has been revealed to man by the Spirit. He affirms

that the Holy Spirit sustains the same relationship to the mind of God that the human spirit does to the human mind and that, therefore, the Holy Spirit alone is able to reveal the thoughts of God.

Revelation is the uncovering for man by the Holy Spirit of what man cannot discover for himself. There is a difference between the undiscovered and the undiscoverable. The first is capable of being found out by additional research, while the last is beyond man's power to fathom without divine assistance. God never reveals to man what he can learn by his own study or be taught by another, for to do this would be to circumvent the very rational powers He gave to man. These are the means by which man is distinguished from the rest of the animal kingdom and exhibits the image of God.

The Holy Spirit is a subject for and of revelation. We can grasp the nature and identity of the Spirit only from a study of the Word of God. We cannot do research into the existence of the Spirit by means of our sensory apparatus, nor by use of our perceptive powers. In clarifying for us the identity of the Spirit, God's revelation will also disabuse our minds of false concepts and free us from mistaken ideas.

To begin with, it seems obvious to me that the Spirit is not the Word of God. These two bear a close relationship to one another and work together in a harmonious way, but they are not identical in any sense. The Word of God has been manifested in three forms: the living Word, the oral word, and the written word. In none of these forms is the Word to be confounded with the Spirit.

The Greek term for the living Word is *Logos*. This was the term for both reason and word. If we think of these in a purely contemporary sense, as we now employ them, we will not do justice to them, nor assign to them the values that they exhibit when employed in the Scriptures. We generally think of reason

simply as an intellectual process, and of a word as a mere symbol of thought. But the ancient philosophers regarded both in a much more profound light. A recognition of this will enable us to understand their use in God's revelation. Reason was creative. The origin and order of the cosmos were attributable to it. Before the material universe existed, reason was. It gave form and meaning to all else. It was the only primal reality, the first cause. As everything existed in an idealistic concept before it was translated into being, reason was the womb out of which all else was delivered. The sculptor could summon the form of reason from marble and give it a body as he did other qualities and attributes of deity, and when he did the statue was worshiped as a god.

In the same way the wise-men of old regarded words. Words were not carelessly used as they often are now, because they were looked upon as possessing life. Indeed, they were thought of as having souls and bodies. The soul was the thought, the vital imagery given birth in the mind, while the sounds or written characters constituted the body in which it was encased. Words could be mutilated by ridicule and distortion of the thought, or they could be murdered by destruction of their message.

Various forms of illustration were devised to portray the power of words to effect change in the universe. They were as arrows shot forth from an unseen bow, and sometimes they were poison bringing death to those who received them into their hearts. Sometimes they were aflame, setting on fire the passions of men and consuming them. They were also looked upon as birds winging their way from a mental dovecote and carrying messages to distant realms. Certainly they were not "dead letters" or dry material, although they might be referred to as chaff.

Recognition of these things will help us appreciate more fully the testimony of the apostle John, who wrote to counter the

inroads of Gnosticism, a dangerous philosophy that threatened the existence of "the Way" in the Greek world. Our present purpose will not be served by lengthy explanation of this pernicious doctrine, but prominent among its tenets was advocacy of the idea that all matter is inherently evil, and God could not involve himself directly with man in the flesh. The Gnostics, who took their name from *gnosis*(wisdom), had much to say about the Logos as the impersonal creative wisdom out of which the world was conceived.

John begins his testimony of Jesus as the Messiah and Son of God by the affirmation, "In the beginning was the (Logos), and the (Logos) was with God, and the (Logos) was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:1-3; KJV). The Logos is here portrayed as personal, and not impersonal. He was Creator and not created. When the beginning occurred He was already existent. Place the beginning where you will, but He was already there.

The Logos was with God, so there existed God and the Logos. But the Logos was God. He was Deity. He was not one who existed with God as of a different nature and character. He existed not from the beginning, but in the beginning, uncreated and creating, so the Logos was God.

John then makes an interesting commentary about the Logos' relationship to man. "In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not" (vv. 4, 5; KJV). The expression, "in him was life," does not mean merely that He was alive. Such a statement would have been unnecessary. The Logos was the repository of life. He was the origin of all life as we know and experience it, but He was not the creator of life. Life is uncreated and eternal. In a sense God is life, for just as there was never a time when God was not, so there was never a time when life was not. Of course, like Paul, I speak after the manner of men

because of the infirmity of the flesh. The expression "a time" as used here is awkward because Deity is not subject to time or space.

The light that was in the beginning in the Logos is the light of men. Life, then, is more than existence. It is illumination. It is a sharing of the divine with the human, a bestowal of the divine energy, the creative urge upon man as a rational being made in the image of God and the Logos. It is the life that is the light, and man by his very nature— his human nature— is instinctively within the range of that light.

Sin brought a pall of darkness upon the universe. It was not created to be in darkness, but in light. Sin changed "the course of this world" and surrendered it to the dominion of the prince of the power of the air, under whose reign the children of disobedience produce "the unfruitful works of darkness." Still, the life, which is the light, continues to bring its impact upon the darkness, and the darkness is not able to overcome it. It cannot engulf or swallow up the light. Just as light is superior to darkness, so life is superior to death. When one moves in, the other must surrender its tenancy.

We come now to the capsheaf of John's witness. "And the (Logos) was made flesh, and dwelt among us . . . full of grace and truth" (v. 14; KJV). This statement bewildered the Greek world and challenged its thinking as nothing did. Even in our own day many persons find it extremely difficult to accept. The word for "dwelt" in the original means tent or tabernacle. What John is saying is that the Logos was made flesh and brought His own tent (body) with Him. He came to share our nomadic life as strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

The Holy Spirit is not the living Word. That Word became incarnate as the Son of God, and when the sonship was publicly recognized, the Spirit descended upon Him as a divine attestation of His relationship. It all happened when Jesus

presented himself to John the baptizer to be baptized in the Jordan River. Here is the account of what happened: "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel therefore am I come baptizing with water. And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God" (John 1:29-34; KJV).

We cannot determine whether or not John was personally acquainted with Jesus before He came to be baptized. It is possible that the expression, "I knew him not" referred to recognition as the Messiah who should be presented to Israel. John had instructions to prepare the hearts of the Jews by giving them knowledge of salvation through the remission of their sins. He was informed that when he would see the Spirit of God descend in the bodily form of a dove and remain upon the One whom he was baptizing, he would know that He was the Son of God.

At the beginning of Jesus' personal ministry there was a distinction between the Spirit and the Son. The two are never confused in the New Covenant Scriptures. In a disputed passage (1 John 5:7) occurs the statement, "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one" (KJV). Even though this does not appear in the oldest and best manuscripts, and may be an interpolation from the marginal notes of an early translator or transcriber, its message is true. There are three, and yet they are one.

Just as the Holy Spirit is not the living Word, so the Spirit is not the oral word as delivered by the apostles and prophets. In a memorable section of his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul discusses his initial approach to their city. It had given its very name to licentiousness and vice of the lowest degree. Here lust was worshiped as homage to the goddess of love, and deviant sex was regarded as a means of expressing religion. In this setting Paul came with a message of cleansing, sanctification, and justification in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of God (6:11).

When the apostle arrived in the city, which prided itself upon the very philosophy that had resulted in an urban sprawl of immorality, he refused to engage in the kind of rhetoric so popular in the Greek world. He specifically affirmed, "When I came to you to present the evidence for the secret of God, which it was my purpose to declare, I rejected the eloquent vocabulary associated with philosophy" (paraphrase of 1 Corinthians 2:1).

The difference between the philosophers and the apostle is simply stated. The philosophers took what was plain and left it a mystery; the apostle took what was a mystery and made it plain. To Paul, the string that unraveled the secret of the ages was the cross. Thus, he declared, "I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:2).

Having committed himself to this course, Paul freely admitted that he personally felt a sense of his own weakness, accompanied by dread and great trembling. This does not mean that he was ready to "press the panic button," nor does it imply that he was frightened by what might happen to him personally. He was deeply concerned about the reception of his testimony. Accordingly, he declared that his language and message were not set forth in plausible words of wisdom.

It is a common trick of hucksters to conceal inferior and

unacceptable fruit in the bottom of a container and the better fruit on top. In much the same way the philosophers were masters in the art of enticement through carefully planned usage of vocabulary. The apostle scorned the employment of such methods. He wrote: "For we are not, like so many, peddlers of God's word; but as men of sincerity, as commissioned by God, in the sight of God we speak in Christ" (2 Corinthians 2:17). He did not put the cross in the bottom of the basket to be discovered later by those who were attracted to Jesus. Christ's death on the cross was placed on top for everyone to see. That death, not a higher degree of moral conduct, made redemption a fact. The speech and message were, therefore, in demonstration of the Spirit and power, in order that the faith of those who heard would not rest in human philosophy, the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. Men were to be captured for Christ, not by being blindfolded or hood-winked by persuasive eloquence, but by the influence of the Spirit and the dynamic of the thing proclaimed. The content of the message, not the wrapper in which it was packed, was to transform profligate Corinth.

A realization of this will preclude a common error created by the *King James Version*, which renders 1 Corinthians 1:21, "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." Many students conclude that this merely refers to the act of preaching. But nothing in the mere act of proclaiming will save anyone.

The original word for "preaching" is *kerygma*, which refers to the thing proclaimed, the message announced. The thesis of the apostle is that the Jews were waiting for a demonstration of power to save them as their fathers were rescued from enslavement in Egypt. Meanwhile, the Greeks were seeking to transcend the human experience by the sheer attainment of logic.

God allowed man to get to the point where he realized the

futility and powerlessness of human rationality to effect a change. It was not until human wisdom had exhausted its possibilities and man had sunk to the depths of degradation that God intervened. Paul described what happened: God waited until the divine wisdom dictated that man had sufficiently demonstrated that human wisdom was incapable of discovering the divine, and at that time it pleased Him by the proclamation of a historical event, which seemed foolish, to save them that believe.

The event was the death of Christ. The thing preached was the crucifixion. To the Jew the cross was a scandal; to the Greek it was simply absurd. It was foolishness. Thus, those who were saved by trusting in the cross manifested a faith that was not grounded in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

In 1 Corinthians 2:6, Paul speaks of "the wisdom of this world," that is, of this passing age. In the following verse he contrasts it with the wisdom of God, which is not transitory but was ordained before the world, that is, decreed before the ages. While man was seeking to penetrate the veil of the future, God was biding His time, waiting in infinite patience for the right moment to draw aside the veil of His own secret. Finally, what man could not ascertain by visual or audible testimony, and what he could not deduce by his rational processes was revealed by the Spirit. The Spirit sustains the same relationship to God as the human spirit does to man. Only the inner man is aware of the thoughts, intents, and purposes of the man. Likewise, no one outside knows or comprehends the thoughts of the Infinite except the Spirit of God.

It is important for us to remember that thought cannot be conveyed from one mind to another without a medium of communication. Thought occurs as imagery in the mind, but that imagery cannot be projected without one's employing mutually accepted symbols. With the use of such symbols the imagery is reproduced in the receptive mind.

The highest form of communication known to rational beings is that of speech. It is a God-given faculty, for God not only created the organs of speech, but apparently taught man the use of them. No man has ever spoken who was not first spoken to, and it is evident that man did not invent or develop speech. God spoke to man, and man learned to speak.

Speech makes use of language, and all language was at first oral. The very word is from *lingua*, tongue. When God was ready to unravel the secret of the ages, the revelation was given by the Spirit, as the divine agent. And the Spirit, in conformity with God's recognition of man as a rational being, capable of receiving and understanding messages conveyed in language, made use of words to unveil the mystery.

Paul wrote that he spoke the things God freely revealed to us, not in words taught by human philosophers, but as revealed by the Holy Spirit, who enables us to interpret spiritual truths in spiritual language (v. 13).

We need to be careful in our approach to this statement. It does not mean that the Spirit invented a new or sacred vocabulary, and used it as a vehicle to transmit the divine message. To have done this would have defeated the purpose of God, for it would not have been a revelation at all. What is meant is simply that the words used by men were adopted and adapted to communicate or transmit divine thought. This is in harmony with the practice and purpose of God.

When God was ready to allow the Living Word to be made flesh, He did not create a new type of body, just as when the written Word was recorded it did not require a new body of type. The Word became flesh by being conceived in a human womb, and delivered by the same birth process as every human being. Jesus stripped himself in order to assume the guise of a slave in that He became like men and was born a human being. And the spoken word came in the linguistic form of everyday

existence.

The difference in the body of Christ and the bodies of other men was not in composition but in the spirit within. The difference in the words of revelation and those of ordinary communication is that the Spirit infused the first. It would appear that anyone could see that the Spirit was not identical with the words of the apostles. There is a difference between a teacher and the words he employs, and Paul is quite plain in saying, "We speak these things in the words the Holy Spirit teaches" (v. 13).

Why do some men eagerly seek to identify the Spirit with the spoken word? It is possible that they want to be able to control, to manage, and manipulate the Spirit. Men can exercise control of words and make them their servants. If the Holy Spirit can be equated with the spoken word, then the Spirit comes under the management of men. The Spirit will be dependent upon the will and volition of men.

What has been said about the oral message is also true of the message committed to writing. There is no difference. What the apostles taught while they were present with the brethren is the same thing they wrote when they were absent from them. Consider such expressions as the following: "Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you this? . . . For even when we were with you, we gave you this command" (2 Thessalonians 2:5; 3:10). For this reason the admonition could be given, "So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by letter" (2:15).

The Holy Spirit never was the Word of God and is not now bound into a volume. The Spirit cannot be set in type, or placed on tape. The Spirit cannot be imprinted on a press or purchased at a bookstore. The written Word is the effective instrument, or word of the Spirit. "And take the helmet of salvation and the

sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Ephesians 6:17; KJV).

Our responsibility is to study the revealed Word, made available to us through the grace of God and by the Holy Spirit. No one can be true to his Christian commitment who derogates either the work of the Spirit or the need for knowledge of the Word. It is not a matter of the Spirit or the Word, but rather of the Spirit and the Word. One can never get a sufficient measure of the Spirit that he no longer needs the Word, nor can he attain to such a degree of knowledge that he no longer needs the Spirit.

It is true that the more one thinks about and appreciates the work of the Spirit, the more ardent will become his desire to acquaint himself with the words of the Spirit. The greater one's knowledge of the Word becomes, the more fervently will he seek the glorious companionship of the Spirit. It is a strangely warped view of God's program for our spiritual growth when one concludes that, because of his acquaintance with the Spirit, he can ignore further research into the Word that the Spirit delivered as God's will for mankind.

What Does the Spirit Do?

Contents

The sincere follower of Jesus seeks to shape his career on earth by the words and deeds of the Lord. Surrender of the life to Jesus means more than one's merely trying to do better according to a new code of rules and regulations. It is not the turning over of a new leaf, but one's turning up with a new life. I am reluctant to say that it means adoption of a new life style, for this implies that one may choose to live by other styles. If Jesus is rejected, what is chosen is not life at all, but death. "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John 5:12; KJV). What is set before man is not a variety of life styles from which to make a selection. God is not operating on a glorified cafeteria basis. He has said, "See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil" (Deuteronomy 30:15; KJV). To walk in the steps of Jesus means more than merely to change direction, although that is obviously involved. When one is crucified to the world and the world is crucified to him, he no longer lives to the world. He is dead. If he is to exist, another must live in him, seeing through his eyes, speaking with his tongue, and thinking through his brain.

Such a representative of the new humanity does not question whether the life of Jesus will be practical or expedient, or whether it will "pay off." The initial decision takes care of all of that. When he ascertains the manner in which Jesus regarded a question and the language Jesus used, he simply speaks of it in that manner.

A good example of this is found in the attitude toward the identity of the Holy Spirit. The follower of Jesus regards the Spirit as did Jesus. When the Christian speaks of the Spirit he does so in the language Jesus employed. The vocabulary of Jesus becomes his vocabulary. He not only speaks where the Bible speaks, but he speaks as the Bible speaks. When he speaks about the Spirit he means the same thing Jesus meant when speaking of the Spirit.

Even the most casual reader will at once see that Jesus regarded the Spirit as a person. It would be impossible in the limited compass of this chapter to explore fully every reference made by Jesus to the Spirit. Fortunately, that will not be necessary for our purpose. We may limit our study to one discourse delivered in the upper room in Jerusalem, just before Jesus' betrayal and crucifixion. The record of this address is found in John 13:16.

John prefaces the discourse with the statement that Jesus knew His hour had come to depart from this world to the Father. Having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. The experience was traumatic for both Jesus and the disciples, as He who prepared to depart from the world must prepare the others to remain in the world. The announcement of His impending exodus was made firmly, but gently. "Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, 'Where I am going you cannot come'" (John 13:33).

This immediately aroused questions, and as usual, Peter put them into words: "Lord, where are you going?" The answer was not direct or definitive. Instead, it cut to the real heart of the matter that of continued intimate association. Jesus replied, "'Where I am going you cannot follow me now; but you shall follow me afterward.'" This did not satisfy Peter, who quickly interjected, "Lord, why cannot I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you." Jesus said that before the cock would crow for

the morning watch, Peter would deny Him three times. Instead of Peter's laying down his life for Jesus, he would lay down Jesus for his life.

Jesus' announcement of His departure brought consternation to the troubled hearts of His followers, and He sought to allay their fears. He assured them that in spite of the fact they would not be able to see Him as before, their relationship would not be dissolved. There would be no loss of *power***. "'He who believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I go to the Father'" (14:12). There would be no loss of** *communication***. "'Whatever you ask in my name, I will do it, that the Father may be glorified in the Son'" (v. 13). There would be no loss of** *companionship***. "'I will not leave you desolate; I will come to you'" (v. 18).**

The word rendered "desolate" is the Greek word *orphanos***. Literally it means one who is bereft of a father or parents. The word is translated "fatherless" in James 1:27. When Jesus announced His imminent departure, He addressed the disciples as "little children." This indicates that He regarded them not only as a father would his offspring, but as young children immature and relatively helpless. He informs them that they will not be abandoned or cast adrift as orphans, but He will come to them.**

A study of the context will show that Jesus was going to request the Father to send another Helper or Comforter, and that this Helper would be so like Him that He could be considered as His other self. The association would be so remarkably intimate that it could be regarded as the Father and Son dwelling in them. "'If a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him'" (v. 23).

The original word Jesus used for this new Companion was

Parakletos. **It is difficult to find an English term to do justice to this Greek word, and translators differ in the terms they select for translation. The word means, "one who stands beside another to render assistance in time of need." Translators of the** *King James Version* **selected the word "Comforter" to designate the work of the Spirit, and "Advocate" to designate the work of Jesus (1 John 2:1)— the only other time the original occurs. Only John employs the word in the Scriptures.**

The word "Comforter" may be somewhat misleading in this age because of our "watering down" of the meaning of comfort. Once the word had to do with strength and defense in time of attack, as the word "fort" indicates. A fortress was a bulwark against death and the destruction of all that one held dear. The word "comfort" is from the Latin *comfortare*, **to make strong. So a comforter was one who brought power to hold out against attacking forces. In the days of King James I the word was a good one to employ for "***Paraclete***."**

The Revised Standard Version **uses "Counselor," and this reflects much the same idea as "Advocate." The Greeks used** *parakletos* **to describe an attorney who appeared beside one in court to advise and defend. This idea is still found in such words as judge-advocate and counselor-at-law.** *The New English Bible* **employs the word "Advocate," while** *Today's English Version* **uses "Helper."**

That Jesus regarded the Spirit as a divine person seems apparent from His language when He said, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another (Helper), that he may abide with you for ever" (John 14:16; KJV). The Greek had two words for "another": *heteros*, **which means "another of a different kind"; and** *allos*, **which means "another of the same kind." The latter is used here. The Spirit was to be another Helper, like Jesus. Just as God sent Jesus as a Helper, He would now send the Spirit in the same role. True, Jesus brought His own tent with Him; that is, He came in a body. The Spirit, on the**

other hand, did not come in His own body, for He was to dwell in the bodies of believers. "He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you" (v. 17).

So personal would the relationship with the Spirit become that it would compensate for the absence of Jesus. The Spirit would be with the disciples forever, literally, through the age in which Jesus is absent. The saints of God are never to be desolate or orphaned by the absence of Jesus. The other Helper, who succeeded Jesus on the earth, will be succeeded only by the return of Jesus.

No one who seriously studies the language of the Lord can fail to note the use of the masculine pronoun in the references to the Spirit. This is especially singular when we remember that *pneuma* **is the word for spirit, and in its original usage meant wind, breath, and sometimes air. For this reason it is generally represented by a neuter pronoun, seeing it is a neuter noun. The word** *pneuma* **did not remain static, but grew in semantic stature through the ages until, in the divine vocabulary, it was given its highest significance. This was also true of** *logos***, which once meant simply "word" or "reason." When the Spirit adopted Logos and adapted it to the Word made flesh, it was given personality, and no longer referred merely to a rational concept or to the means of communicating it. So it was with** *pneuma***.**

In speaking of the Helper who was to take His place, not once did Jesus leave the impression that He was describing a mere breath or influence. Over and over the words "He" and "Him" are used to portray the abilities and functions of the Spirit as a person. Consider, for example, the declaration, "Even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him; you know him, for he dwells with you, and will be in you" (John 14:17).

The masculine pronoun *ekeinos* **is indicative of a person who can share in the intimacy of fellowship. Those who object to**

this point out that the term "Spirit of truth" is used as an identification, and implies something besides personality. This is fallacious reasoning when one recalls that the Spirit is often identified by terms depicting His ministry to the saints. There are other expressions, such as the Spirit of life, the Spirit of grace, and the Spirit of promise. In the passage immediately under consideration He is called "the Spirit of truth" because of His ministry through the apostles to the unregenerate world. He was to guide them into all truth, recall for them the truths Jesus had taught them and provide the truth related to things yet to happen. He was not to be a spirit of truth, or truthfulness, in the abstract, but the Spirit through whom saving truth was to be revealed and channeled. He could be known as an abiding presence. The word "know" so often used in the Scripture does not refer to an accumulation of facts about another, but personal identification with him.

A good illustration of this will be found in the words of Jesus, "'I know my own and my own know me, as the Father knows me, and I know the Father'" (John 10:14, 15). Our experience of the indwelling Spirit is a transcendent life-sharing phenomenon in which the world cannot participate. It belongs only to those who have established a covenant relationship with God, the Spirit being the seal of the covenant.

Those who are inclined to cavil frequently refer to the statement that the world cannot receive the Spirit because it cannot see Him. They ask if the disciples of Christ can see Him, and if not, how they can know that He dwells in them. It may help our understanding to know that the word originally related to men who were appointed as public deputies to attend the games, inspect conditions and participants, to see that all that transpired was legal and orderly. The word did not refer to merely watching, as a spectator in the stands, but to one who looked with interest and purpose.

Because it is unconcerned and indifferent, the world does

not see the Spirit. The world occupied with distracting trivia, is insensible to the Spirit's power and pleading. The eyes of the world are closed (Acts 28:27), and the Spirit cannot manifest himself. On the other hand, the person whose heart is open will dwell with Him and be in Him. "With" signifies companionship, while "in" signifies identifying relationship.

In John 16:13-15, the pronouns "he" and "his" occur nine times, in such a context that the personality of the Spirit must certainly be recognized. The Spirit is spoken of as coming, hearing, speaking, recognizing authority, guiding, declaring a message, and glorifying another.

Jesus told the apostles that He was leaving much unsaid because the burden of complete revelation would weigh too heavily upon their hearts. They were in no condition to hear more, lest they be overwhelmed by future responsibility and the suffering that would accompany their ministrations. They were disturbed already by the news that Jesus was leaving them.

"When he comes who is the Spirit of truth, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own authority, but will tell only what he hears; and he will make known to you the things that are coming. He will glorify me, for everything that he makes known to you he will draw from what is mine. All that the Father has is mine, and that is why I said, 'Everything that he makes known to you he will draw from what is mine'" (John 16:13-15; TNEB).[5]

W*hen He comes*! **This phrase betokens the forthcoming arrival of a person as certainly as it does when used in connection with the advent of Jesus. The Spirit was to accomplish three great objectives: (1) to guide the apostles into all the truth, even to revealing things yet in the future; (2) to glorify Jesus; (3) to be sent by the Father at the request of Jesus, but also to "come" by His own power.**

He is the Spirit of truth, that is, truth is His very nature. The revelation can be relied upon. It is authoritative and decisive. The expression "all truth" does not refer to the truth related to all aspects of the universe. It is the truth that redeems and reconciles, and restores the divine-human relationship. The apostles were not yet in a position to receive all details of this saving truth that the Spirit would relay to them. He would do so as they would become able to assimilate and properly apply it.

One who trusts in Jesus can scarcely doubt that the divine design was to vouchsafe to the apostles during their lifetime the full and complete revelation of all that is essential for man to know of his relationship in the kingdom of Heaven. The position of the apostles is unique and they have no successors. Whatever was not revealed during their lifetime is not essential to God's purpose for our lives. Not a single authentic revelation has been given to man since John on Patmos laid down the calamus after writing, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen" (Revelation 21:21; KJV).

Once more it must be emphasized that the revelation of the Spirit was not given upon the authority of the Spirit. The power of the Spirit to speak is not questioned, but He did not assume the royal prerogative of doing so. The thoughts conveyed were those of the Father, and the Spirit transmitted them with infinite value and faithfulness. The Spirit told the apostles on earth what He had been told to speak from Heaven. His message was not just truthful; it was *the truth***.**

Jesus promised that the Spirit would inform the apostles of what was to come. Those things related to the destiny of the kingdom of Heaven in its encounter with the kingdoms of this world were to be made known as sources of comfort to the saints. The believers would be assured of the final triumph of good over evil, of righteousness over unrighteousness.

This was no new role for the Spirit. He had spoken to and

through the prophets of old, warning a profligate people of their fate, revealing to kings and lesser rulers their impending doom. Now, as the divine Helper sent to complete the mission of the Son on earth, He was to gaze through the telescope of the future and see the return of the Lord and the culmination of the divine purpose as it relates to mankind.

Paul was instructed concerning the state of affairs that would obtain in the last days. "The Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils" (1 Timothy 4:1; KJV). He was informed concerning the nature of the resurrected bodies of those who had died, and the transformed bodies of those still alive at the coming of Jesus (1 Corinthians 15:50-57). In the same connection he was told of the ultimate arrangement by which the Son was to deliver the kingdom of God to the Father, so that God could be all in all.

Peter was empowered to write of the certainty of the coming of the day of the Lord, which was to be unexpected as a thief. He also wrote that at that time the "heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (2 Peter 3:10; KJV).

But John, banished to the isle called Patmos, gazed upon the panorama of the future as it was unrolled. The great sequence of events was paraded to the very end. His divine commission was to "Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter" (Revelation 1:19; KJV). He depicts for us in awesome symbols the clash of titanic forces directed from Heaven and from the depths of the abyss. There is the repeated admonition, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

If revelation is the unfolding of mystery previously hidden

from the discernment of men, surely John's volume is appropriately named. It begins with the narrator watching a door opened in Heaven, and a voice like a trumpet issuing the invitation, "Come up hither, and I will shew the things which must be hereafter." John records the fact, "Immediately I was in the spirit" (Revelation 4:1, 2; KJV). He pens his startling vision, only to conclude, "And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done. Behold, I come quickly" (Revelation 22:6, 7; KJV).

The Spirit was also to glorify Jesus. The original for "glorify" is *doxazo*, meaning "to magnify" or "honor." Jesus is the very basis of revelation. All revelation revolves around Him as the center of the moral and spiritual universe. In the solar system the planets revolve around the sun, and in the moral universe all things gain their meaning from the Son of righteousness. "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Revelation 19:10).

It is interesting to note that the Spirit would glorify Jesus because everything He would make known to the disciples would have come from Jesus. The original wording should be more correctly rendered, "He will draw from what is mine" (John 16:15; TNEB). It is as if the Spirit were drawing out of a cistern or well of living water to provide sustaining truth to men. While that which is drawn out is sufficient to quench the thirst, it does not exhaust the supply. Much remains to be learned and known when the Son of man comes in the fulness of His glory, accompanied by all of His holy angels. Jesus' statement that the Spirit would draw from what belonged to Jesus is important because it emphasizes the Godhead in its unity. The Father is portrayed as the originator of all things, the Son as the heir of all things, and the Spirit as the revealer of all things ordained for the good of mankind. In Matthew 11:27, Jesus says, "All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save

the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him" (KJV).

Any theory of Deity that makes the Son inferior to the Father in glory cannot be sustained by Scripture. God entrusted everything to the Son, and the Spirit glorified the Son by taking from the inexhaustible supply to share it with the apostles, that we in turn might be profited. We glorify the Son in our willing acceptance of the revelation the Spirit gave concerning Him. We dishonor Him when we deny that testimony.

In summarizing the content of this chapter, let us remember that when Jesus spoke of the Spirit He did so in personal terms. He was forced to leave the earthly scene in order to accomplish His purpose. His ascension into Heaven was as important to the divine order as His descent into the earth. It was essential for Him to make intercession at the right hand of God, but He would ask the Father to send another Helper who would make intercession for the saints on earth. This Helper was to be His replacement, and He would function so effectively it would be as if Jesus were still here.

In an interesting statement Jesus said, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you" (John 16:7). The opening words of this declaration indicate that it would be difficult for the hearers to accept what Jesus said. He reinforced His announcement by insisting that He spoke the truth.

Obviously the apostles would not understand how it could be profitable for Jesus to leave them, so He proceeded to explain that the Spirit would do for them what He could not do by remaining on earth. Moreover, the Spirit would convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, in a manner that could not be done if Jesus remained in the flesh.

All of this points to one conclusion, that Jesus regarded the

Spirit as a person, a divine person, and all who desire to imitate Jesus in thought and speech must do the same. Perhaps nothing is more comforting than for one to realize that the divine plan involved an intimate fellowship on earth, first with Jesus dwelling in His body, and second with the Holy Spirit dwelling in our bodies. "Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God?" (1 Corinthians 6:19).

How Does the Spirit Work?

Contents

Our knowledge of the Holy Spirit must come from what the Spirit has revealed concerning himself in the Word of God. I say this in spite of the fact that the view may be unpopular in a time when personal feelings and emotional reactions are frequently considered to be the source of information concerning the nature of the Holy Spirit. This is not to affirm that the Spirit is confined in or to the Word of revelation, nor is it intended to lessen the value of any experiential relationship with the Spirit by the Christian. It does mean that, in revealing the will of God, the Spirit has described and identified himself in such a manner that man can ascertain all that he needs to know about the character of the Spirit in exactly the same way that he learns other aspects of the divine disclosure.

We dare not test or measure the Word of God by personal feelings. We must judge our feelings in the light of God's Word. The ultimate criterion can never be the subjective, but the objective. It is foolish to say, "I do not know what the Word of God says, nor do I care, for I know how I feel." Feelings can be deceptive. One can be as happy when he believes a lie as when he believes the truth. One can be persuaded that a lie is the truth, as every confidence man on earth realizes.

Jeremiah 17 records the judgment of God upon His people. They are condemned for two things: many persons trusted in men rather than in the Word from Heaven (v. 5); others trusted in their own hearts. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and

desperately wicked: who can know it?" (v. 9; KJV). It must be remembered that this is not the evaluation of the prophet, but the declaration of God.

One can be deceived by others, but he can also be deceived by his own heart. This necessitates the twofold warning found in the Scriptures: "Let no man deceive you with vain words" (Ephesians 5:6); "Let no man deceive himself" (1 Corinthians 3:18; KJV). These things are mentioned so that the reader will understand why my appeal is to the revelation of God as we seek to identify the Spirit and to grasp the significance of His work in our world.

I believe the Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit is a divine personality, and it will be my purpose to share with you my reasons for so believing. This is done without apology inasmuch as Jesus said, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4; KJV).

It is not my intention to become embroiled in the theological donnybrook about the nature and constitution of Deity. I shall be content to speak of Scriptural things in Scriptural terms without inventing or projecting a specialized jargon that tends more to confuse than to enlighten. If it is true that all we know about the nature of God is what has been revealed, and if the revelation has been provided in words, it is apparent that we can find the terms to express any aspect of the divine will.

All thought must be expressed in words to be communicated. If there are no words for a thought, the idea is not there. If, on the other hand, there are words to express the idea, and if all persons accept the words of Scripture as the norm, there can be no division, as long as all men use Scriptural terms to express Scriptural ideas.

An example of what happens when people do not accept the Scripture is found in the use of the term "Trinity." This word does not occur in the Scriptures. It was first used by Tertullian in the second century, and was employed to express a view of the nature of God that was under attack by certain of his contemporaries. Consequently, the brand, *Trinitarians*, was being applied to certain ones, and this, in turn, led to the designation *Unitarians* for the opposers. Both groups considered themselves orthodox expositors of the apostolic doctrine. Yet, if one had asked any apostle if he were a Unitarian or Trinitarian, he would not have understood the question. I shall not belabor the question of whether Deity consists of "three persons in one" or "one person in three."

Matthew speaks of the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (28:19). Paul writes of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 13:14). One who studies the Bible can determine the functions ascribed to each of these, and from what is taught can reach conclusions as to their respective offices.

Upon this basis I consider the Holy Spirit as a personality. I use the term "personality" rather than "person," although I have no objection to the latter. Our word "person" comes from the Latin word for an actor's mask, and refers to one who enacts a role or performs an individual part in a drama. We still use *persona* to designate a character in a novel or play. The Holy Spirit had a unique part to play in the relationship of Deity to creation, and the sum of the individual qualities and attributes assigned to the Spirit make Him a personality.

Having introduced the word "attributes" we are now prepared to examine the Scriptures and see whether the Spirit is portrayed as an intelligent being in His own right.

***The Spirit possesses a mind*. "And he who searches the hearts of men knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the**

Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God" (Romans 8:27).

This statement occurs in a context of reassurance that God has provided the Spirit to help us in those matters where we show weakness. One such area is that of prayer. We do not know how to pray as we ought. There are deep desires and earnest longings that we cannot express. Our linguistic talents fail us when we try to translate our profound feelings into our limited vocabulary. In such a time "the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words."

We can be certain that the Father knows the mind of the Spirit and that we are not left to "go it alone." In 1 Corinthians 2:11 we are told that the Spirit knows the mind of God, and in Romans 8:27 we learn that God knows the mind of the Spirit. The mind, or intellect, is the possession of an intelligent being, and this leads us to accept the Spirit as being in that category.

The Holy Spirit can speak and thus communicate thought. **Upon this matter there is no room for doubt, if anyone accepts the plain statements of the Scriptures as valid. Occasionally the Spirit took command of human tongues and used them as organs of speech. In Acts 11:6, Peter states, "Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas" (KJV). In Acts 4:25, God is given credit for what He "by the mouth of thy servant David hast said." In Acts 28:25, the apostle declares, "Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias." In Hebrews 3:7 occurs a citation from Psalm 95:7 with the preface "as the Holy Ghost saith," also in Hebrews is a quotation from Jeremiah 31:33, of which the writer said, "The Holy Ghost also is a witness to us" (10:15-17).**

Again, Jesus told the apostles not to be concerned about their defense when they were apprehended and arraigned before governors and kings. He said, "But when they deliver you up,

take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you" (Matthew 10:19, 20; KJV). Notice that both the content and method would be taken care of by the Spirit.

A question that always seems to agitate the minds of men who must "pin things down" and arrive at specifics before they can be happy is the way in which the Spirit has revealed the message of God. Certain terms have been created to designate the various ideas upon the subject. Some have contended for verbal inspiration, others for thought transference, and the like.

As is frequently the case when we try to capture divine action in human vocabulary, the Spirit may not have been limited to any one theory or any combination. He may well have employed all of them at different times. We know that in old times "men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God" (2 Peter 1:21), and we are also told that God spoke in former times through the prophets in different times and in many ways (Hebrews 1:1).

On one occasion the apostle wrote, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly," that is, exactly or precisely. This is an indication that at other times the speaking was done with less directness; however, we must never develop a theory that eliminates the use of words in the communication of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit employed language known to men and used by them in their social interchange; otherwise, what was conveyed would not have been a revelation at all. If the language employed was an esoteric or secret code, the subject would have remained a mystery. This is the exact opposite of revelation.

On the Day of Pentecost the Spirit came to provide visual and audible proof that Jesus had been exalted to the right hand of God and had received of the Father the promised Holy Spirit. Through the apostles He testified to wonderful works of God. He

communicated this testimony through the native languages of the hearers who were present "from every nation under heaven." Those who spoke in "other languages," that is, in languages they had not learned, did so "as the Spirit gave them utterance."

No revelation has been given to man except in the language of man, that is, as relates to the obligations and duties of man. Nothing else could be regarded as a revelation. It is true that because of the multiplicity of languages used by peoples, tribes, and nations, translation is necessary to make the message understandable to those who did not receive it directly. Revelation is one thing, and translation is another, however.

In the previous chapter, mention was made of Paul's original encounter with the residents of Corinth. This city, the center of commercialized vice in the ancient world, was a veritable showcase exhibiting the fruits of human wisdom coupled with idolatry.

Into this maelstrom of human wickedness entered one who confessed that he came "in weakness and in much fear and trembling." He came bearing the good news that the living God had visited the earth in the form of a Son, and that message was presented in words of stark simplicity. It was a matter of allowing the facts to speak for themselves. Paul intimates that he had the power of deciding his approach to a given culture. He could have used the philosophic method. He was familiar with the teachings of the pagan world, for he quoted from Cleanthes, Epimenides, and others, at various times. But he chose to decry the wisdom of "the rulers of this transitory age" and to impart the wisdom that "God decreed before the ages for our glorification."

This wisdom has to be revealed. It could not be learned by visual or audible methods, because it was beyond the power of the senses to ascertain. Nor could it be learned by

rationalization. It was outside the realm of deduction for finite minds. It could be revealed only by the Holy Spirit. It bore no resemblance to the spirit of the age, because that spirit knows nothing of the purpose and pleasure of God.

We are told that the Spirit used words for communicating the things freely given of God. "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth" (1 Corinthians 2:13; KJV). Surely it requires an intellectual being to select and employ a vocabulary to transmit divine thought to human mentality. The Spirit possesses a mind to accumulate divine information and the ability to share it.

The Holy Spirit can testify to fact and bear witness to men and through men. **This is made clear in Jesus' talk with His disciples just before His betrayal and crucifixion. These men were sad because Jesus had told them He was to leave them and return to the Father. They had forsaken everything in order to follow Him. They had been His constant companions for three or more years. The contemplation of a life without this Friend was almost unthinkable. Jesus pointed out to them that He would compensate for their grief and loneliness by requesting the Father to send them another Helper, a Companion who would remain although He himself was absent. In direct language He identified this advocate as the Holy Spirit, and informed them of some of the things the Spirit would accomplish and provide. He reassured them with these words: "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning" (John 15:26, 27; KJV). The Holy Spirit was to come and bear witness to the culmination of the divine purpose: that all authority should be granted to the Son, and He would occupy a seat at the right hand of God. The apostles were witnesses to the personal ministry of Jesus from its beginning. The Spirit descended upon Jesus to inaugurate His personal witness to the world. The same Spirit would descend**

upon the apostles to inaugurate their witness to the world.

In many respects the apostolic mission was the mission of the Spirit, the apostles being the agents. The Spirit would act as a teacher and guide, assuring perfect recall of the precepts of Jesus. "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26; KJV).

An analysis of this statement may be helpful. The Spirit was to be sent by the Father, but in the name of Jesus. This last expression indicates the authority under which the Spirit would operate. At the accession of Jesus to the throne, all authority was conferred on Him, and He will continue to exercise it until the last enemy has been destroyed. Any divine action taken in the kingdom of Heaven must be under the authority of the Son.

The Holy Spirit has no direct authority, but acts or functions by derivative authority. All authority was invested in the Father until it was transferred to the Son (1 Corinthians 15:27). The Spirit does nothing in His own name, that is, upon His own authority.

Another point of interest is that the Spirit was to make use of the rational powers of the human messengers of Jesus. It is certainly true that upon occasion, and in emergency, the Spirit commandeered the tongues of the apostles to speak words of defense with no thought required by the speaker. Such involuntary speech was certainly rendered when the apostles were unjustly arraigned before kings and magistrates. But the Spirit also taught them, and this involves a learning process requiring cooperation upon the part of the student. In addition to the faculty of perception, that of memory was also stimulated so that those who had been with Jesus could recall the things He had taught. Later this would be designated "the gift of knowledge."

The promise to the apostles was amplified by another statement of Jesus: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you" (John 16:13, 14; KJV).

"All truth" refers to the body of truth of divine revelation, that which is required to save and sanctify men. It was such truth the apostles were commissioned to furnish the world, and which they were to receive from the Spirit. The expression, "for he shall not speak of himself," is frequently misunderstood and misapplied. It is taken to mean that the Spirit will say nothing about himself, His influence, or function. This cannot be true because the Scriptures furnish us much material about the Holy Spirit. If the Spirit had not spoken about himself we would have known nothing about His work.

The expression here does not mean that the Spirit will say nothing about himself, rather that He will not speak upon His own authority. This passage is clear even in the *King James Version* **when properly considered, "He shall not speak of himself;** *but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak*.**" The thought is that the Spirit is the agent for, not the source of, the testimony.** *The Revised Version* **and** *New English Bible* **are correct in rendering the expression, "For he will not speak on his own authority."**

It must be noted that the Spirit was not only to bring to memory the things Jesus had taught in the past, but was also to reveal future things. Jesus had to forgo dealing with many things because His disciples were not yet able to bear them (John 16:12). The word translated "bear" means literally, "to lift up for the purpose of carrying." Metaphorically it signifies one's taking up thoughts or assimilating concepts. In subsequent revelation the Spirit disclosed many things that were to

transpire. One such record is called The Revelation, or *Apocalypse*. It actually portrays the future of the kingdom of the heavens and the kingdoms of this world.

The Spirit would glorify Jesus, in that every disclosure that was made would be drawn from Jesus, the embodiment of all wisdom and power. Jesus made this clear. "All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you" (John 16:15; RSV). It is evident that the Spirit was to be the earthly advocate or helper during the time Jesus reigned by the will of the Father. It seems equally evident that the witness borne by the Spirit was to be personal, teaching, reminding, and foretelling future events. These are not the actions of a vague influence, but of an individual, divine and prescient.

The Spirit is credited with selecting and calling men to fulfill certain missions. **The congregation of saints in Antioch of Syria was fortunate in having a number of prophets and teachers in its service. "While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.' Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off" (Acts 13:2, 3).**

It is interesting to note that while they were sent forth by the congregation, Luke also gives credit to the Holy Spirit. "So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia; and from there they sailed to Cyprus" (v. 4). That the Spirit mapped out their route and determined the places they were to visit is strongly suggested in Acts 16:6: "And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia." From this it appears that the Holy Spirit is a personality regulating and arranging the work of apostolic mission, exercising control over both time and place for the initial proclamation of the good news in various places. We, being human and limited in both knowledge and

insight, are not always capable of judging the opportune time in which to present our witness to a people; but the Spirit, knowing the hearts of men, is able to judge.

The Spirit is portrayed as possessing will and acting accordingly. **Three chapters of Paul's first letter to the Corinthians are dedicated to a discussion of special gifts of the Holy Spirit. This was made imperative because of strife, especially over misuse of the ability granted to some to speak in other languages (1 Corinthians 12-14). In 12:7 Paul points out that the gifts are distributed to various members of the body, and each one who receives a manifestation of the Spirit is to use it for the common good.**

There follows a catalogue of the nine spiritual gifts, all of which were apparently possessed by individuals in that congregation. The apostle then writes: "All these are inspired by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills" (v. 11). It is clear that in the distribution of gifts the decision as to who should receive them remained with the Spirit. Regardless of how eager one might be to receive a special gift, the final apportionment was not dependent upon the will of the recipient, but upon the will of the Spirit.

An interesting observation about the origin of prophecy occurs in 2 Peter 1:21, where the apostle asserts that the things spoken and written by godly men of old did not result from an interpretation of events by the prophets themselves. They did not observe what was going on and deduce their prophecies from their views of what might lie ahead as a result. They spoke as they were motivated by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit determined both the appropriate time and content of prophetic declarations. In this the human will of the mouthpiece was made subservient to the will of the Spirit.

A summary of what has been said in this chapter will remind us that the Holy Spirit possesses a mind, and can

communicate thought. Moreover, the Spirit can testify to what has been said by another, guide listeners into truth, men into certain missions, and exercise will in selecting those who are to be recipients of special gifts and qualifying abilities.

Again, it must be emphasized that these are attributes of a person and can hardly be assigned to a mere influence or a vague, motivating force. This means that if one is to share in the life of the Spirit he must become a partaker of the divine life— the life of God— in a genuine personal relationship. This is the distinguishing characteristic between the one who recognizes Jesus as Lord over his life and the one who rejects His lordship. One's acceptance of Christ makes the difference between life and death.

How Is the Spirit Related to God?

Contents

One cannot always judge a person by those with whom he is associated. Sometimes a grave injustice is wrought by attempting to do so. But I think a legitimate conclusion to reach with reference to the Holy Spirit is that He is both a person and is divine. He is repeatedly mentioned in direct conjunction with two divine persons, with no qualifying statement indicating that He is different. The conclusion is bolstered by the connections in which the combinations occur and by the functions performed by each of the principals.

For the sake of brevity we will confine ourselves in this chapter to the New Covenant Scriptures. A good place to begin is in conjunction with the incarnation. Gabriel was sent to Mary from God (Luke 1:26). He assured the virgin that the Lord was with her. He quieted her fears by telling her that she had found favor with God. She was then told that she would be impregnated by the Holy Spirit. "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, . . . therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35; KJV).

In this instance we have God, the Holy Spirit, and the Son of God. It is the Father who wills, the Spirit being the executive agent, the conveyor of life. Nothing about the fertilization of a human ovum by a divine seed, or life-giving principle, should cause doubt to one who believes in the creation of man by God. In the beginning the breath of God, breathed into an elemental body taken from the dust of the earth, made human life possible.

In one sense, the only life we have is the result of the divine and human, and all of us by nature are sons of God. If the first Adam became a living being by the divine breath, it is not strange that the second Adam began His earthly mission by a union of the divine and human.

We do not need to understand or be able to explain fully the varied roles of the principals involved in the birth of Jesus to realize that the Father, the Spirit, and the Son all had distinctive parts in the drama of the ages. The means may remain a mystery while we accept the fact upon faith. When Mary submitted herself to the will of God with the words of resignation, "Be it unto me according to thy word," her womb became the depository of the divine seed, and that meant that the Son of God was sent forth to be "made of a woman, made under the law" (Galatians 4:4; KJV).

We turn now from the advent of Jesus to His final commission to the twelve before His ascension to Heaven. As Matthew records it, after the resurrection of Jesus the eleven apostles journeyed northward to Galilee. They gathered on a mountain where He had promised to meet them. When they saw Him they worshiped Him, although some felt that "it was too good to be true." Then Jesus revealed that all authority was granted Him in Heaven and on earth, a way of explaining the universality of the lordship bestowed upon Him by the Father. This empowered Him to send them forth as ambassadors to all nations of men. *The Authorized Version* **renders His words, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19, 20).**

Once again we have found the Holy Spirit appearing in relationship with the Father and the Son, and in such a connection that a clear distinction is to be made between the three, although such unity is manifested that the word "name"

appears in the singular.

We turn attention next to Ephesians 4:4-6, where Paul enumerates the seven "ones" upon which our unity is conditioned and must be maintained. The immediate context expresses concern that those who are called conduct themselves in a manner that will bring honor upon that calling. Since we have been called into unity with Christ, nothing reflects against that calling more than strife and division. Of all people on this earth, those who are in Christ Jesus should be most harmonious.

In order to maintain oneness, four essentials are recommended: lowliness, meekness, longsuffering, and forbearance in love. The first of these is better represented by our word "humility." It must be remembered that in the world surrounding Ephesus this was not regarded as a virtue. Humility implied cowering and cringing under servility, or slavishness. Jesus clothed this term with beauty and grace by His own sacrifice and service. He humbled himself to come in the form of a servant and became obedient unto death, even the death on the cross. In this light, humility took on a completely new color. It was no longer regarded as an indication of weakness, but of genuine strength and power. E. H. Chapin said, "Humility is not a weak and timid quality; it must be carefully distinguished from a groveling spirit. There is such a thing as an honest pride and self-respect. Though we may be servants of all, we should be servile to none."[6]

Humility is as essential to the maintenance of unity as breath is to life. When one knows his qualifications and abilities, and yet is willing to step down in favor of another who may not have the same potential; when he is qualified to play first violin, but is willing to "play second fiddle" so that harmony will prevail in the orchestra, unity will generally be preserved. Humility recognizes its rights, but refuses to assert or insist upon them, realizing that rights are secondary to responsibilities.

"Meekness," in its original Greek form is full of beauty that cannot be completely captured in any single word in our English language. Any correct understanding of it must begin with the recognition that meekness is not weakness, but just the opposite. Many centuries ago a Christian wrote, "The meek are not those who are never at all angry, for such are insensible; but those who, feeling anger, control it, and are angry only when they ought to be. Meekness excludes revenge, irritability, morbid sensitiveness, but not self-defense, or a quiet and steady maintenance of right."[7] It is doubtful that any modern writer could give a better description of the quality called "meekness."

Nothing else is more likely to cause strife and contention than impatience coupled with a short temper. The word for "longsuffering" is *makrothumia***, a combined form of** *makros***, long, and** *thumos***, temper. Certainly it is associated with endurance under pressure, but it is interesting to know that it never occurs in the Greek classics. The virtue it represents was unknown to the poets and philosophers, or was despised by them as unmanly. So the word can be regarded as one given meaning or content by the life and teachings of Jesus.**

The reason for this is easily seen when it is recognized that *makrothumia* **was first a characteristic of God, who patiently endured and put up with human shortcomings in order to work good. The longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah while the ark was being prepared. God is long-suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish. The gods of the Romans and Greeks were conceived as vengeful and spiteful. Since people are like their gods, it is understandable why longsuffering is an attribute of Christians rather than pagans.**

Impatience, the enemy of the trusting heart, upsets the mental equilibrium, chafes the spirit, and destroys all inner tranquillity. It is an irritant enflaming the mind and erupting in open criticism mingled with the gall of bitterness. Ralph Waldo Emerson, who wrote much about patience, declared that

patience coupled with fortitude conquers all things. He urged all men to adopt the pace of nature, declaring that her secret is patience. It is unwise to allow the corrosion of impatience to rust the hinges of the heart so that when the blessing is delivered it cannot open the door to receive it.

Closely allied to patience is the word "forbearing," from *anecho*, or "hold back." It describes the person who does not give vent to hurtful expressions, that is, one who restrains himself from actions that antagonize or intensify feelings. We are to bear one another in love, not allowing shortcomings or failures to cause us to explode in anger or recrimination.

All of these qualities are emphasized as essential to those who are "eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Unity is not created by these attitudes, great and noble though they may be. Unity is received from God and not achieved by man. It is a gift of the Spirit. "Maintain" is from a word meaning "to guard, watch, or preserve." It was used twice to describe the action of the four squads of soldiers detailed to guard Peter while in prison (Acts 12:5, 6). The unity of the Spirit has been entrusted to us, placed in our custody, and we are under divine orders to keep it, lest it inadvertently slip away while we are off guard.

The restraining force by which we can keep the unity of the Spirit is the bond of peace. To the extent that we disturb or weaken the peace we lessen the hold we have upon unity. When peace flies out the window unity leaves by the door. The four personal qualities prescribed are not given in order to maintain unity, but to strengthen the bond of peace, which binds unity within the framework of our association. Our calling is to exhibit and manifest the unity God has ordained as His ultimate purpose only in Christ Jesus.

Seven units in that unity are gifts of the Spirit. All of them are provided by divine wisdom and are to be received by us as

essential to the eternal design. Not one of these provides for any question as to its existence or validity. It is not that there ought to be one body, one Spirit, and one hope, but *they are*. It is not that there should be one Lord, one faith, and one baptism, but *they are*. Their existence is not contingent upon human understanding or discovery. They are integral parts of the given unity, the unity of the Spirit. Perhaps that is why the one Spirit is mentioned before the other members of the Deity.

By one Spirit, one faith, one baptism, we are brought into relationship of the one Lord, welded together in the one body and made partakers of the one hope. All of this is according to the will of one God and Father whose personality penetrates the entire arrangement.

A powerful argument for the oneness of all the believers is here presented, and is enhanced by the harmony between the one Father, one Lord, and one Spirit. In spite of their divergent functions they are one in nature and purpose. Since we are indwelt by the one Spirit, we should work together. It is appropriate to have impressed upon us first of all the attributes essential to the maintenance of unity, and then learn that the unity of the Spirit involves Heaven as well as earth.

Another illustration of the association of the Spirit with the Father and Son is found in the treatment of spiritual gifts, the *charismata*, possessed by the saints in Corinth. The congregation planted in this center of Gentile profligacy was fortunate to have had the ministrations of Paul. He refers to them as "my workmanship in the Lord," and writes, "If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you; for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 9:2).

From the very beginning the Corinthians were accustomed to those demonstrations which constituted divine credentials, confirming the apostolic message as of heavenly origin. All truth must be rendered credible before it can be believed. Credibility

can be established only by evidence. Natural truths may be sustained by natural evidence, but supernatural truth requires supernatural validation. So Paul reminded the Corinthians "The signs of a true apostle were performed among you in all patience, with signs and wonders and mighty works" (2 Corinthians 12:12).

When the apostle was forced to move on to other fields of labor at the call of the Spirit, he did not leave the Corinthians without divine assistance, but conferred upon them gifts of speech and knowledge, in the same manner he had confirmed his own proclamation. "In every way you were enriched in him with all speech and all knowledge— even as the testimony to Christ was confirmed among you— so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ who will sustain you to the end" (1 Corinthians 1:5-8).

Unfortunately, those who were invested with the gifts became proud of their possession, and began to abuse them by diverting them from their true purpose. It became necessary for Paul to recall them to a more responsible attitude. We dare not rejoice over their malpractice, but we can still benefit from what was said in correcting the error, and we must not forget to profit by their mistakes.

It is interesting to note that Paul began the section of the Corinthian letter relating to spiritual gifts with the words, "Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant" (1 Corinthians 12:1; KJV). The word "gifts" is not in the original, and a literal rendering would probably be "spiritual things"; however, the information that follows leaves no doubt that the subject is the special endowments, that is, the gifts of the Spirit.

The expression "I would not have you ignorant" points up the fact that acquisition of knowledge in matters of the Spirit is the will of Him who sent the Spirit. The same expression is used

with reference to things, such as Paul's purpose and intention with regard to Rome (Romans 1:13), the persecution suffered because of his preaching in Asia Minor (2 Corinthians 1:8), God's design as related to Israel (Romans 11:25), and the resurrection of the sleeping saints (1 Thessalonians 4:13). When God furnishes information, refusal to learn is inexcusable.

Obviously, God does not want us to continue with unused mental capacities. Ignorance is not bliss! It is also apparent that if God does not want us to be ignorant about a subject, the information He supplies will be adequate. An examination of the revelation related to spiritual gifts will show that we are supplied facts concerning their origin, variety, purpose, function, and regulation.

It is important to remember that the dispelling of ignorance concerning spiritual gifts was not left to those who had the gifts, but as assumed by the apostle who put it in writing. The Corinthians came behind in no gift, but "to one (was) given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:8; KJV). If the gifts were self-validating and instructive, the Corinthian congregation would have required no apostolic letter upon the subject. Yet, to this congregation the written message was sent. Hence those who would not be ignorant concerning spiritual gifts should turn to the apostolic letter for instruction and guidance. The saints in Corinth who possessed the gifts were ignorant of their purpose and function, otherwise this portion of the letter was superfluous.

After declaring he would not have them ignorant about spiritual gifts, Paul wrote, "Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led" (v. 2; KJV). The real problem at Corinth was created by those who had the gift of speaking various kinds of tongues. They had exercised this gift in such a manner that unbelievers dropping in upon the assembly could have concluded they were insane.

The Corinthians had been idolaters, having grown up in a pagan culture. The apostle mentions that they had been carried away to dumb idols. Graven images could not speak. Molten gods could provide no message or revelation. But the living God could not only reveal His thoughts, but could also empower His servants to convey His words in "other tongues." So overjoyed were the former heathen that theirs was a speaking God, they could hardly restrain themselves.

Men respond according to the spirit that motivates them. In 1 Corinthians 2:12, the apostle contrasts the spirit of that age with the Spirit of God. The Corinthians had paid homage to dumb idols even as they had been led. The spirit of the decadent age influenced them in their devotion, but Paul gave them to understand that no one "speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost" (1 Corinthians 12:3; KJV).

To say that Jesus is Lord constituted a much more serious responsibility in the Roman Empire than it does today. Rome was regarded as tolerant of the religious beliefs of the provinces, and well she might be, because she regarded them all as harmless superstition. While this was true, one thing was required. Annually, on the birthday of the emperor, every citizen had to appear in the marketplace before the bust of Caesar, burn a pinch of incense, and publicly affirm "Caesar is lord." This presented no particular problem to the pagans who believed in a multiplicity of deities. The Roman Senate had officially elevated Caesar to the pantheon and declared him to be divine. His character, while certainly not godlike, was like that of the other gods.

The one group in the Empire whose members could not freely join the populace in hailing Caesar was the community of the reconciled. The apostle states the problem clearly: "There be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth (as there be gods many, and lords many,) but to us there is but one God, the

Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him" (1 Corinthians 8:5, 6; KJV). The problem was complicated by another requirement of any person brought under suspicion. If an accusation was filed against him concerning his faith in Caesar, the magistrates were to bring him before the statue and demand a public affirmation under penalty of death or banishment from family and friends. If the accused was suspected of belonging to the despised followers of Christ, he was required, in addition to his affirmation of the lordship of Caesar, to announce, "Anathema Jesus," that is, "Jesus is accursed." So to say that Jesus was Lord might well be a matter of life and death. Preserved for us is a remarkable document alluding to this very matter, a letter written by Pliny the Younger to the Emperor Trajan, near the beginning of the second century. Pliny was appointed governor of Bithynia. Never having had to cope with the problem of Christians, he wrote to gain information as to the proper procedure to follow. If you have not read his letter it will be interesting to do so. Here it is:

> **Having never been present at any trials of the Christians, I am unacquainted as to the methods and limits to be observed in examining and punishing them. Whether, therefore, any difference is to be made with respect to age, or no distinction is to be observed between the young and adult; whether repentance admits to a pardon; or if a man has been once a Christian, it avails him nothing to recant; whether the mere profession of Christianity, albeit without any criminal act, or only the crimes associated therewith are punishable; in all these points I am greatly doubtful. In the meanwhile the method I have observed towards those who have been denounced to me as Christians, is this; I interrogated them whether they were Christians; if they confessed I repeated the question twice again, adding a threat of capital punishment; if they still persevered, I ordered them to be executed. For I was persuaded, that whatever the nature of**

their creed, a contumacious and inflexible obstinacy certainly deserved chastisement. There were others also brought before me possessed with the same infatuation; but being citizens of Rome, I directed them to be carried thither.

These accusations, from the mere fact that the matter was being investigated, began to spread, and several forms of the mischief came to light. A placard was posted up without any signature, accusing a number of people by name. Those who denied that they were Christians, or had ever been so, who repeated after me an invocation to the gods, and offered religious rites with wine and frankincense to your statue (which I had ordered to be brought for the purpose, together with those of the gods), and finally cursed the name of Christ (none of which it is said, those who are really Christians can be forced into performing), I thought it proper to discharge. Others who were named by the informer, at first confessed themselves Christians, and then denied it; true, they had been of that persuasion formerly, but had now quitted it (some three years, others many years, and a few as much as twenty-five years ago). They all worshiped your statue, and the images of the gods, and cursed the name of Christ.[8]

It was for just such a crisis that the Spirit was given as Comforter, an inner source of strength, so that men might glorify Christ in death as well as in life. When Jesus promised to send the Spirit He said, "He will glorify me." Caesar had his legions willing to die with his name upon their lips, and if the Lord of life could not trust those who had enlisted under the banner of faith to do the same, His cause was lost. Thus, the acclamation "Jesus is Lord," while the Roman lictors stood guard ready to flay the flesh from the body with their rods, or to sever the head with the axe, was not only a test of one's faith in the lordship of Jesus, but a proof of the indwelling Spirit. Men act according to the spirit that motivates them.

No man speaking by the Spirit of God would say

"anathema Jesus," as even the Roman governor of Bithynia bore witness. Neither could a man make the public declaration that Jesus is the Lord except by the help of the Spirit who dwelt in him. It is interesting to note that the term "Spirit of God" is here used interchangeably with "Holy Spirit."

After this introduction the apostle affirms that various gifts and functions were to be performed by their use, but all of these had a common origin. "There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:4). The whole tenor of the chapter is the unity that should prevail in the body of Christ. Inasmuch as the body must supply many needs and perform diverse functions, gifts were imparted of such a number and nature as to enable the body to fulfill its mission. God is a divine economist. He did not create needs and then supply gifts to meet them but needs existed and He created gifts to meet them.

We can be certain that the saints did not lack anything essential to their fulfilling their role upon earth. We can be just as sure that every gift was to be utilized in such a manner as to edify or build up the whole. The exercise of the gifts must not be divisive, for the Spirit is one. Nine gifts are mentioned, and these were given to encourage and stimulate the body to act as God had ordained.

"There are varieties of service, but the same Lord" (v. 5). The original term for "service" is *diakonia*, sometimes translated "ministry." This may be misleading in our day when ministry is regarded as the domain of one man hired by a congregation as its minister. No such specialized meaning was applied to it by the apostles. Every Christian is a minister, and every form of service is part of the ministry. Various ministries are to be carried out and each is essential and commissioned by the same Lord.

"And there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in every one" (v. 6). God works in His saints, Christ directs the work into meaningful forms of service,

and the Spirit empowers and enables the saints to fulfill their varied tasks. A difference exists between the Holy Spirit, Christ, and God, and yet a profound unity is involved in them. Surely the Spirit is as much a divine personality as the other two.

One of the most beautiful statements of Paul is his closing sentence to the Corinthians, in 2 Corinthians 13:14. The setting lends interest to the reading. He pointed out that if he should return to Corinth he would not spare any of those who had sinned. His stated intention was to give full proof to all who questioned that Christ was speaking through him. He held forth the hope that the Corinthians would abstain from evil, not because of a desire to gain approval for his own work, but to establish their own moral integrity. He urged them to be "perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you" (2 Corinthians 13:11; KJV).

In spite of the agonizing problems in the congregation, the apostle concludes with the words that have often been repeated as a benediction: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen" (v. 14). The breakdown of these three blessings is important. It was not by accident that the various attributes were credited as they were.

"Grace" is a good example of a term into which the Spirit breathed and infused new life. The result is that any attempt to define it serves only to confine it. Our verbal garb acts as a straitjacket. The consequence is that many who parrot a definition think they understand grace, when all they do is to underestimate it. Grace is not so much to be explained as to be experienced. God is not so much concerned that we experience a share of grace as He is that we share in the experience of grace. That experience relates to the eternal purpose from the moment of its inception and on through the ages of ages. As is so often the case, a study of the derivation constitutes the best definition, for

the evolution of the term made it a "vessel fit for the Master's use." In the beginning, *charis* referred to charm, an inner quality resulting in what we refer to as personal magnetism or admirable skill. That kind of concern for others manifested itself in proper decorum under all circumstances, politeness, and deference mingled with understanding of others. We revert to this original use when we speak of those who possess *charisma*, that attractiveness which draws others to them. It is what we mean when we speak of a graceful person, or one who is gracious.

With the passing of time *charis* took on a deeper meaning. The quality the word described was not attained by study or striving, but seemed to be inherent. It was thus assumed to be a gift of the gods, enabling certain individuals to stand out from the multitude. The sculptor whose skill could draw forth figures from marble was said to posses a *charism* for carving. The orator whose use of words was powerful enough to make men alternately laugh and weep was thought to possess the *charism* of speech or rhetoric. We still speak of persons who are gifted in the same manner.

C*harisma* seemed to be present in an individual from earliest childhood, before he had exerted any effort to secure it. Thus the ancients deemed that it was a gift of a god, unearned and undeserved, empowering one to fulfill the purpose for which destiny had marked him out. Any failure to fulfill the responsibility entailed by the gift was an insult to the deity that bestowed the gift.

By the time Jesus came to earth the word *charis* had come to refer to an undeserved gift, bestowed by a deity, for the purpose of helping to fulfill the ideal of the gods among men. It is no wonder that the Spirit adopted a term so pregnant with meaning and endowed it with a richness it never before possessed. From a gift bestowed by an imaginary god it came to mean that quality in the living God which motivated Him to

share himself with sinful men.

Grace reached its apex in Jesus, who emptied himself and took on the form of a slave that He might share in the life of men doomed to die. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ is not simply something that He gave to men or bestowed upon them. It embraces the whole arrangement by which He agreed to abide with us in our suffering that we might someday share in His glory. The greatest gift of Jesus to the world is himself.

In direct conjunction with the grace of Christ is mentioned the love of God. It is a philosophic question whether grace was prompted by love, or love by grace. It is true that the important thing is to be recipients of these blessings whether or not one ever has a clear concept of their metaphysical relationship. My personal conviction is that grace grows out of and is a fruit of love. This is based upon the fact that God is love. This is His essence. Grace is the benevolence applying that love to fallen man. It is God's moving into the human realm and sharing himself without restraint or limitation.

"Love" is our translation of *agape* **(ah-gah-pay), one of four words for love found in the Greek language. The others were too limited in scope and nature to be employed in describing the love God had for us and we must have for one another.** *Agape* **is not a classical word, and was not found in the writings of the great philosophers. Why did the Spirit select it and reject the others? One reason is that the other terms generally describe an emotion. They have to do with an involuntary feeling of the heart. Emotions are spontaneous reactions to situations or conditions. They require no conscious effort and do not occur as a result of our searching or seeking. They belong to the heart and its passions.**

Agape **is not an emotion, although it involves the emotions. It is a state resulting from an act of will a deliberate choice of the mind. One cannot speak of "falling in love" when talking about**

agape, **because it is not something into which you tumble. It is a vital, active principle of life. There is a difference between falling when you cannot help it, and stooping down to share the lot of another. Jesus did not become the Son of man because He fell in love with us, for He did not fall at all. Because He loved us He stooped down to participate with us in the human predicament.**

Agape **represents an achievement of the mind, a victory attained by determination. It is a conquest over one's nature. This is obvious when it is realized that no one can love his enemies until selfishness is vanquished and he has conquered every natural inclination and desire.**

Other forms of love see the good or value in a person or thing and love because of it. *Agape* **creates its own sense of values by the very act or process of loving. Under other kinds of love a thing is loved because of its value; in** *agape* **it is valued because it is loved. God loved us when we were alienated and hostile, hating Him and hating one another. Nothing in us was loving or lovable, but because we were loved we were made deserving. "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8; KJV).**

Agape, **like** *charis*, **can never be fully defined in words developed for human communication. To reduce it to words is to imprison it in a finite conception. In the very act of imprisoning it, it escapes us. All that we can do is to create a working statement by which we will be able to measure our own concept of love, rather than measuring love itself. My own rather feeble mental approach to it can be stated as follows:** *Agape* **is that active and beneficent goodwill which stops at nothing to serve the good of the beloved object.**

Love bestowed to elicit or receive a response is prompted more by the need of the giver than the receiver. It is not a benefaction, but an investment. Noteworthy is the fact that love originated with One who had no need and is always outgoing

toward those whose needs are great. We are told that God is love, but we are also told that "love is of God."

The love we share for others is not really our love at all. We become channels for the love of God. The water flowing through the pipes into our homes does not belong to the conduits through which it is pumped. Likewise the love flowing like a fountain through us is not ours. It is poured out into our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

This brings us to the third item in the benediction to the saints at Corinth: the communion of the Holy Spirit. Remember that it is connected with the majestic terms, grace and love. This very association is indicative of the manner in which God regards it. Grace, love, and fellowship— these constitute a triad of blessings associated with the greatest names in the universe. It is a matter of great importance that the apostle closes his epistle to the distressed and distressful congregation at Corinth with such a benediction.

The word here for "communion" is *koinonia***, generally translated "fellowship." Most lexicographers agree, however, that it is a word of such depth that no single English term can exhaust its meaning. This becomes evident when we realize the variety of terms for it occurring in the** *King James Version***. The root word means "***common***," indicating something shared or held in common. From it we derive such words as "community."**

What is the fellowship of the Spirit? Certainly it is not something men attain or achieve by their own merit or efforts. Just as grace is bestowed by Christ and love is bestowed by God, so fellowship is a gift of the Spirit. We share in grace, love, and life as blessings from Heaven. The very best definition of fellowship is "the sharing of a common life," and the *New English Bible* **so translates** *koinonia***.**

The fellowship, or communion, of which the apostle writes

is not the mere participation with others in common pursuits. Men may pool their resources and combine their efforts without recourse to the Spirit at all. History is filled with misguided attempts of atheistic social reformers to create colonies where the name of God was proscribed and reading of the Bible was prohibited. The common life in which we are to share is the life of the Spirit.

To substitute the term "share the life of the Spirit" for the term "communion (fellowship) of the Spirit" still does not answer the question as to what is meant by, or involved in, the life of the Spirit. In the New Covenant Scriptures the word *koinonia* **is found twenty times. It is rendered "fellowship" twelve times in the** *King James Version*, **which also translates it "communion" four times. Of the twelve times it is translated "fellowship," one-third of these occur in 1 John 1. In this chapter we gain a glimpse of the common life in which we participate through the Spirit. John begins the chapter by an affirmation regarding the living Word, that is, the Word of life. He asserts that this Word was manifested, or embodied, and that the apostles had visual, audible, and manual proof of His existence upon the earth. They had heard Him, seen Him, and touched Him.**

The life of the Word was eternal life, and when the apostles gazed upon the Son of God they saw eternal life incarnated. "We have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us" (1 John 1:2; KJV). Three actions are referred to in this statement. The first was personal experience, and experience of the best kind. "We have seen." This provides eyewitness testimony. The second is public proclamation of the testimony, bearing witness to the world. The third is declaration to the saints for their edification and comfort. That which was manifested to the apostles was life, and that which they proclaimed to the saints was life. But it was not simply existence, it was life that had been with the Father, the God-life now shared with men in a bodily

manifestation. This is important because it demonstrates that Christ came in order to show that eternal life can dwell in man even now.

The next statement of the apostle is significant, and yet few catch the significance of it. "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship (*koinonia*) with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ" (v. 3). The use of the word "fellowship" obscures the real meaning to modern minds, although the first-century disciples would have understood it.

Paul is clearly saying that the eternal life with the Father has now been embodied in a Son. Those who were called as His envoys have been made shareholders in this eternal life. The purpose of their testimony was that those who heard might share in the same common life with them, since the life in which they participated was with the Father and the Son. The Spirit not only operates upon our hearts through the good news to bring us into the life-sharing relationship, but dwells in our hearts in order to maintain that life within us. Just as there is no physical life without the spirit of man, so there is no spiritual life without the Spirit of God. "The Spirit is life because of righteousness" (Romans 8:10; KJV). The activating principle of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus makes us free from the law of sin and death.

Much is involved in the phrase, "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." This frees us from condemnation, and liberates us from fear, including even the fear of death. The life is in the Son. On this matter there can be no quibbling. "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men" (John 1:4). "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). It follows, then, that one who has the Son has life, and this is exactly what we are taught (1 John 5:11, 12).

To share in the life of the Spirit is to participate in eternal life, a transcendent personal relationship with God and Christ.

The one God, the one Lord, and the one Spirit join in bestowing upon us grace, love, and eternal life. No greater gifts could possibly be offered to men in the flesh. No greater responsibility could be ours than to cherish and use these gifts to the glory of the Father. No more beautiful expression or benediction could be employed in closing a letter than that in which Paul closes his epistle to the Corinthians.

In this chapter it was pointed out that the Holy Spirit is in constant association with the Father and the Son. While different functions are peculiar to each, there is a divine harmony apparent in their relationships. It is not essential to faith that we understand all of the intricate workings of God, or that we comprehend in its fulness the spiritual realm. We have the testimony of God, and upon the basis of that evidence, we accept the personality and divinity of the Spirit.

Where Is the Spirit?

Contents

We have arrived at that point in our study of the Holy Spirit where we can investigate His actions toward men and the effect of their attitudes upon those actions. Many questions arise in the minds of those who seriously ponder these matters. How has the Spirit acted toward the unsaved to bring them into covenant relationship with God? Can such persons resist the Spirit, or are they plastic in His grasp, and changed without their own consent? What about His actions toward those who have been reconciled to God, delivered from the domain of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son? Can they subdue and sublimate the Spirit, or render Him ineffective in their lives? In this last relationship we will learn that the Father has not abandoned us. We are not left simply to our own devices, but possess a divine Assistant, dwelling within our bodies and strengthening us in the warfare against evil. This is the basis of our hope.

When the apostle Paul was warning against immorality he predicated his solemn charge upon two grounds: the immoral man sins against his own body, and the Holy Spirit abides in that body. To sin against the body is to sin against the abode God has purchased and ordained for the Spirit. "Shun immorality. Every other sin which a man commits is outside the body; but the immoral man sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a

price. So glorify God in your body" (1 Corinthians 6:18-20).

The Greeks had two words for "temple." Both are used in the Scriptures, but a distinction is made between them. *Hieron* **designated the whole sacred enclosure and its precincts, including the outer courts, porches, and subordinate buildings. The other word** *naos***, the one here employed, referred only to the Holy Place and Holy of Holies, the heart of the hallowed complex, and the dwelling-place of the Most High. Jesus taught inside the** *hieron* **in Jerusalem, but never entered the** *naos***. Access to this was restricted to members of the priesthood, the tribe of Levi.**

The only sanctuary God has on earth today is the consecrated human heart. He does not dwell in temples made with hands, and when men speak of material buildings as sanctuaries they use language that is not a part of the New Covenant concept. The heart of a man, like the heart of the temple, is the *naos* **where God meets with him, and where the Spirit abides. It is interesting to remember that the word** *hieron* **is not once used metaphorically to designate the present dwelling of God. It is not the surroundings, but the heart, which is sanctified.**

The temple of old in Jerusalem was erected as a place in which God's glory was manifested. During its dedication, "the house of the Lord, was filled with a cloud, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord filled the house of God" (2 Chronicles 5:13, 14). That same glory floods the inner recesses of the bodies of the sanctified today, those who have been bought with a price, and they should glorify God in their bodies and spirits.

Under the first covenant, the worshiper had to go up to the house of the Lord. Now he is the house of the Lord. Then, each man had to take his offering to the priest, but now each man is a priest bringing an offering. Then, the Spirit was given to a select

few to reveal God's will, now the Spirit is bestowed upon all those persons who have responded to that revelation.

That the Spirit sustains a personal relationship is indicated by the fact the He may be grieved. "And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed for the day of redemption" (Ephesians 4:30). Grief, a feeling or emotion, involves mental anguish, sorrow, or regret. That the Spirit can suffer from our offences or grieve because of our actions is proof of His personality. One cannot grieve a mere influence.

How can the Spirit be grieved? The context intimates that He may be offended by hurtful, vile, or filthy language. The preceding statement is, "Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for edifying, as fits the occasion, that it may impart grace to those who hear" (v. 29). The succeeding statement shows we may grieve Him by our attitude toward the other saints. "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, with all malice" (v. 31).

The Spirit dwells in every person who is a member of the one body, and one member's speaking evil of or insulting another constitutes an assault upon the abode of the Spirit. In view of the anger, clamor, and slander, so prevalent in our day in communities of the saved, it is apparent that the Spirit must be often and deeply grieved. To employ filthy and obscene speech is to bring sadness to the Spirit, one of whose purposes in our lives is to cleanse and purify the inner temple.

In addition to one's grieving the Spirit, it is possible to lie to Him. This is evident in the case of Ananias and Sapphira, and is attested to by the apostle Peter. The original congregation of saints in Jerusalem included many widows within its fold. All of the members were Jews, among whom the synagogues always cared for their widows with special concern. A voluntary arrangement was introduced among the saints whereby those

who wanted to could sell their real estate and chattels and deposit the receipts with the apostles. The apostles then purchased and distributed a daily allotment of food, paid for from the fund that was created under this agreement.

There was no compulsion to sell, and even those who did so were not obligated to bring the price and deliver it to the apostles. Ananias and his wife, perhaps motivated by a desire for praise, entered into a conspiracy. They would sell their land for a certain sum, retaining part of it for themselves while giving the remainder in such a way that it would create the impression it was the full amount (Acts 5:1-10). Ananias came into the place where the apostles were, only to be greeted by Peter with the question, "'Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back part of the proceeds of the land?'" (Acts 5:3). He then informed the culprit that he had not lied to men, but to God. When he heard this accusation, Ananias dropped to the floor dead.

His wife, Sapphira, came in three hours later, not having been informed of the death of her husband. She was asked if the sum contributed was the full payment received for the land. She declared that it was, whereupon Peter asked, "'How is it that you have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord?'" (Acts 5:9). Peter did not accuse them of lying about the Spirit, but to the Spirit. In so doing they tempted, or tried, the Spirit, and paid for it with their lives. If one can grieve, falsify to, and try the patience and knowledge of the Spirit, surely the Spirit is a divine personality.

The Holy Spirit can be resisted as He strives through the testimony revealed to men of God to bring the hearers into subjection to the divine will. This is clearly shown in the situation surrounding the death of Stephen, the first martyr to the Christian faith. The story is recorded in Acts 6 and 7. Stephen was a Hellenist, described as a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit. He did great wonders and miracles in Jerusalem in

confirmation of his message concerning the Messiah. His effectiveness in making converts aroused the bitter ire of other foreign-born Jews living in the city and maintaining their synagogues. Their public disputes with him ended in a debacle for their cause and served only to impress the hearers with his wisdom and power. Unable to vanquish him in a debate, they resorted to other means, hiring men to accuse him of blasphemy against Moses and God. This crime was punishable by death, until Rome removed the right to execute from Palestinian nationals. In the tension then existing, however, a mob was formed, which surrounded and captured Stephen and hustled him away to the place where the Sanhedrin met, under the presidency of the high priest. False witnesses were paid to make accusation to the effect that they had heard him constantly blaspheme the holy city and the law. In support of this it was alleged that Stephen had distinctly announced more than once that Jesus of Nazareth would destroy the place and alter the law Moses had given. In accordance with the legal procedure of the council, the high priest asked the accused man, "Are these allegations true?"

Stephen made a masterful speech in defense. In reply to the first charge he affirmed that wherever God met with man it was a holy place, in proof of which he cited numerous cases to show that the greatest events in Jewish history took place outside of Palestine and Jerusalem. God appeared to Abraham in Chaldea, and to Joseph in Egypt. He called Moses at the burning bush in Midian, and distinctly told him to remove his shoes because the place was holy ground. The law itself was given at Sinai in the wilderness, not in Jerusalem.

Stephen further reminded them that when Solomon dedicated the temple he declared, "Yet the Most High does not dwell in houses made with hands" (Acts 7:48). The Lord had asserted, "Heaven is my throne, and earth my footstool" (v. 49). So the universe was hallowed, and one spot was no more sacred than another except as the lives of men made it so.

In answering the charge that he had blasphemed the law, Stephen recalled that even while Moses was up in the mount to receive the law, their fathers made a calf and offered sacrifices to it, rejoicing in the works of their hands (v. 41). He accused those present of receiving a law by the disposition of angels which they had never kept and were even then disobeying.

The climax of the address was reached in the impassioned words, "'You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you'" (Acts 7:51). To enforce the truth of this charge he demanded that they name one prophet who had not been persecuted by their ancestors. He declared that the fathers had killed those who had predicted the coming of the Messiah, and the very ones now sitting before him had betrayed and murdered that Messiah when He came.

The sequel is well known. Members of what ordinarily was a stately gathering completely lost their composure. Screaming to drown out any further words from the speaker, and placing their hands over their ears, they converged upon him to silence him. Shoving him along, they hastened him outside the city limits, and, temporarily forgetting the ban on killing imposed by their Roman overlords, they stoned him to death.

It is apparent that stubborn disregard for the words spoken by the ambassadors of the Spirit constitutes resistance to the Spirit. This was true in ancient times when God's men spoke as the Holy Spirit motivated them. "In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets" (Hebrews 1:1). This same God had also revealed to his "holy apostles and prophets" the mystery of Christ (Ephesians 3:5). To resist this message with unconsecrated heart and ears is to resist the Holy Spirit.

Some students of the Scriptures have suggested that the book we call "Acts of the Apostles" should have been named

"Acts of the Holy Spirit." True, it does not contain all the acts of all the apostles, nor even all the acts of some of the apostles. It does record some of the acts of some of the apostles, but these men acted under the guidance and supervision of the Spirit. The direct assistance of the Spirit was not limited to the twelve. A good example is the case of Philip. He was one of the seven selected to relieve the apostles of daily distributing food to the many widows in the community of saints in Jerusalem. When violent persecution broke out against the church after the death of Stephen, it became necessary for the disciples to flee for safety to the country districts of Judea and Samaria, where they proclaimed with zeal the good news.

Philip entered into one of the cities of Samaria and announced the news of the Messiah with such accompanying demonstrations of power that the crowds listened eagerly to what Philip said, and there was great joy in that city (Acts 8:5-8). Under normal human arrangements Philip would have remained there to consolidate his remarkable success, but God had other plans for him.

Accordingly, the angel of the Lord instructed Philip to leave the city and travel southward to the road that led from Jerusalem toward Gaza. This former Philistine stronghold had long since been deserted. When he arrived at the highway junction, Philip caught sight of an Ethiopian reading from a scroll while riding in his chariot. At this point the Holy Spirit entered the picture by instructing Philip to "Go and join this chariot." Philip did so, and was used of the Spirit to clarify Scriptural matters that the Ethiopian government official did not understand.

When the man was satisfied that Jesus was the Messiah of whom the prophets had spoken, he asked what was to prevent him from being baptized. He ordered the chariot to stop, the two of them went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. The record is explicit at this point. "When they came up out of the

water, the Spirit of the Lord caught up Philip; and the eunuch saw him no more" (Acts 8:39). One cannot help wondering about the reaction of the man when his recent companion disappeared, but he recovered and went happily on his way.

This indicates that the Spirit, who knows the hearts of men, operated to bring together one who knew the message and the other who needed it, was ready for it, and was honest enough to accept it. When the task was accomplished in a certain place or with a certain person, the messenger was removed. Philip, snatched away suddenly from the presence of the Ethiopian royal treasurer, appeared next in Azotus, passing through and preaching in all the cities until he reached Caesarea (Acts 8:40).

An even more interesting account of the direct activity of the Spirit in bringing together one who knew the good news and those who were eager to hear it is recorded in Acts 10. One cannot fully appreciate this account unless he remembers that until this time the good news has been shared with Jews and proselytes only. Even the Samaritans, although they were generally despised by the orthodox Jews, were circumcised, and they revered the Pentateuch, the writings of Moses.

Now the time had come to fulfill the divine goal of uniting Jews and Gentiles in one body through the Spirit. The first non-Jew chosen was Cornelius, a Roman centurion in the Italian cohort. We are told that Cornelius was a religious man, acknowledged as good and just by the whole Jewish nation (Acts 10:22). The Jew chosen to take the message was Simon Peter, a strict adherent of kosher regulations throughout his life.

After thorough investigation of the details, the story is exceptionally interesting. Cornelius, stationed at Caesarea, the headquarters for the Roman occupational forces, prayed regularly. One afternoon, while engaged in private devotions, he saw an angel who informed him that his prayers and acts of charity were recognized by God. He was told to send to Joppa

for a man named Simon, who was also called Peter.

As soon as the angel vanished, Cornelius began to carry out the order. He summoned two household servants and a military orderly and sent them to Joppa to bring Peter back with them.

At noontime the next day, while the three men were entering the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. He became hungry, and while the household staff was preparing food he fell into a trance. In these words Luke describes what Peter envisioned: He saw "heaven opened, and something descending, like a great sheet, let down by four corners upon the earth. In it were all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air. And there came a voice to him, 'Rise, Peter; kill and eat.' But Peter said, 'No, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean'" (Acts 10:11-14).

The voice came twice more and Peter made the same protest. Then the whole thing was taken up again into the sky. Immediately Peter came out of the trance, bewildered about the implications of the vision. At this very time, the three messengers, who had been inquiring about the location of the house came to the front entrance and called out to ask if Simon Peter was there. The Holy Spirit told Peter to arise from where he was sitting and trying to figure out the vision, and go down to the ground floor. He further told Peter to accompany the three men who were asking for him, and to go without reluctance. He said, "I have sent them." In this instance the Spirit specifically sent messengers to locate a man with the message, then dispatched him with the messengers.

This did not end the direct involvement of the Spirit in the case of Cornelius. When Peter arrived at the home of Cornelius, he found relatives and friends of Cornelius awaiting him. After proper introduction Peter began to speak to them and now Peter recognized the meaning of the vision on the housetop. He knew

now that it indicated that God was no respecter of persons, that national and ethnic differences no longer had any relevance. As Peter began to speak about Jesus of Nazareth, and reached the point where he said, "Whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins" (v. 43; KJV), the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard.

Peter brought with him six Jewish brethren, who were utterly astonished when they heard the Gentiles begin to speak in tongues and to praise and glorify God. They realized that the Holy Spirit had been present and poured out upon the Gentiles as a gift. Peter asked, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" (v. 47; KJV). He commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Henceforth, there would be one body, composed of both Jews and Gentiles.

It is indicated by what we have thus far studied that the Spirit personally directed how and when men should act in the formative stage of the community of the redeemed. He sometimes directed an envoy to contact one who was ready for the saving truth, and other occasions sent men to find a proclaimer of the good news. At other times He barred the way into certain localities for those who had planned to infiltrate those places with the message.

One example of this will suffice. When Paul and Silas traveled through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the congregations, they crossed over the Taurus Range, into the plains of Asia Minor. It was their intent, having labored in Phrygia and Galatia, to enter the province designated as Asia, but Luke records that they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to do so (Acts 16:6). In view of this they skirted the area and started northward expecting to go into Bithynia, a region where a number of Diasporan Jews were to be found. Again they were thwarted because the Holy Spirit would not permit them to enter (Acts 16:7).

We can only surmise the reason for the circumvention of these plans. We do know that they came to Troas, where Paul had a vision in which a European citizen appeared and asked him to come into Macedonia and help them. A new continent was thus opened to the apostolic proclamation. The whole Grecian peninsula heard the message, and men and women rejoiced in the hope of the knowledge of Christ Jesus.

While we are thinking in terms of the action of the Spirit and the result of the attitudes of people toward such action, we should give attention to two other matters: quenching and blaspheming the Spirit. The second of these is in a category requiring special attention and will be reserved for the next chapter. We will conclude this segment of our study with a few observations about quenching the Holy Spirit.

The pointed admonition, "Do not quench the Spirit," occurs in 1 Thessalonians 5:19. The context may indicate that it relates to an attempt to restrain or inhibit those who possess special gifts of the Spirit. It may likewise refer to quelling the Spirit within oneself, not allowing Him free rein or control. The statement occurs just before another in the same vein which says, "Despise not prophesyings." Prophecy was one of the special gifts mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:10.

The word "quench" is ordinarily employed to signify smothering or extinguishing a fire. It is an appropriate term in view of the fact that the Spirit is sometimes spoken of as a flame or fire, and, paradoxically, as water. Thus the Spirit may be both kindled and poured out, depending upon the metaphor used at the time. A good example is found in 2 Timothy 1:6 where the young evangelist is told to stir up the gift of God which he possessed. The verb, in common use in the days of Paul, meant to rekindle, or renew a blaze, by poking and rearranging coals.

A fire may be quenched by any one of several methods. One may pour water upon it until it turns into dead coals and no

longer flames up. Few of us need to be reminded of the occasions when we have seen someone, with intensity of purpose and zeal, completely squelched by constant rejection of his ideas and proposals. Many young Christians, and not a few older ones, have been driven to indifference by the constant reminder, "It will not work."

Again, a fire may be quenched by smothering it with noncombustible materials. In the parable of the sower, Jesus speaks of the seed falling among thorns. The quality of the seed was as high as that upon good ground, but the problem was that the thorns sprang up and choked it. The thorns are identified as the anxieties and pressures of the age in which we live, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lust of other things. It has often been assumed that the thicket of briers represented what is sometimes referred to as "the pleasures of life." It is true that one may become obsessed with recreation and sports, and we even use the word "fan," which is an abbreviation for fanatic, to describe such a person. But Jesus did not have this in mind at all.

Many of His hearers were hard pressed to survive in a land occupied by their Roman military masters. Few indeed had time to play or indulge in idle pastime. The "cares of this world" refer to the over-anxiety for food and clothing, and for the security mistakenly thought to reside in things. A subtile form of doubt besets those who think they have faith, when their faith is a trust in their own power and ability to become a success by piling up treasures on earth. Jesus condemned this lack of real faith. Nothing else tends to stifle the Spirit in one's life as does the attitude of those who would be rich in this world's goods.

A third way to quench a fire is simply to neglect it. One does not expect a fireplace to flame up, glow, and send forth heat from the fuel supplied it a week ago. There must be constant replenishment or else the fire will go out. One of the chief causes of failure is the "neglect of so great salvation," as the writer of

Hebrews refers to it. Unless we regularly read the Word of God and pray, we will fail to survive. Yesterday's worship is like yesterday's warmth. It was welcome and stimulating at the time, but it will not warm the heart today.

A man who had once been a faithful follower of Jesus, but who had lapsed into unconcern and indifference, said, "I did not really deny the faith. I simply allowed it to slip away from me." The Badlands National Monument is an example of what can happen through erosion. Gradually through the centuries, land that once sustained an abundance of animal life by its growth in rich topsoil, began to erode until now it is a startling monument of waste and unproductiveness. So it is with many lives that once strengthened others, but are now badlands of apathy and ungodliness.

To quench the Spirit is to allow the purpose and meaning of life to burn low within. The personality becomes cold and hardened, and only the ashes remain to remind the world of a once warm spiritual being.

What Is the Sin Against the Spirit?

Contents

A perennial question for all who speak about the Holy Spirit is that of blasphemy, or sin against the Holy Spirit. The words of Jesus concerning all kinds of transgressions have been picked to pieces in order to identify what is popularly referred to as "the unpardonable sin." The result is that modern radio preachers have come up with a number of different "sins" to which this designation is applied. It is obvious they cannot all be correct, and it is possible none of them are. The consistent listener might almost be led to think the unforgivable sin is one's failure to send a contribution to the preachers.

When Jesus used the expression, "blasphemy against the Spirit," He did so in contrast with "every sin and blasphemy." His words were, "'Every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven'" (Matthew 12:31). Blasphemy is a specific sin against the Spirit as contrasted with every other sin. Integrity in interpretation demands that this fact govern any attempt at exegesis.

A widely-read expositor once took the indefensible position that deliberate murder of a Christian constituted the sin against the Holy Spirit. He reasoned that the body of such a person was the temple of the Holy Spirit. The man made out an elaborate case and arranged a quantity of Scriptures in defense of his position, but several things are wrong with it. Blasphemy has nothing to do with an act of murder. Furthermore, murder can be forgiven, and was, even when perpetrated against the only

begotten Son of God. On the cross Jesus prayed for those who were taking His life: "'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do'" (Luke 23:34). If their sin was unforgivable, such a prayer would have been a farce. The fact is, the prayer was answered a little more than seven weeks later, on the Day of Pentecost, in the city of Jerusalem. Peter confronted the Jews who were present, saying, "This Jesus, who did many miracles and wonders among you, you crucified and killed through lawless and merciless men" (Acts 2:22, 23). Yet, when those who heard this were stabbed by their consciences and asked what they must do, Peter replied, "'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit'" (v. 38). The prayer of Jesus for the forgiveness of His murderers was answered when the sinners complied with the terms of forgiveness as laid down by the Father.

A preacher, who had sought without success to counsel a person of suicidal tendencies, wrote a booklet advancing the idea that suicide was the unpardonable sin. His reasoning was that the sin was premeditated, and in the commission of it the sinner cut off all opportunities for repentance. For that reason he placed himself outside the pale of forgiveness. But this is certainly not the sin about which Jesus was speaking. If suicide is an unpardonable sin, there are two such sins, rather than just one. Suicide is the taking of human life, but the degree of culpability for the act will have to be assessed by God who knows the hearts of men. Certainly the perpetrator, who is also the victim, cannot be judged by a human tribunal, although men are prone to make posthumous statements about such situations. Only God can know the mental state at the time when one takes his life. There is no ground for saying a person who commits suicide cannot be forgiven. He may be, but if this is so, it will not be because of the impossibility of forgiveness due to the nature of the act.

Perhaps the most common of all the opinions about one's

sinning against the Spirit is that it is resistance against the call of the Spirit until death overtakes the sinner. There is a fallacy in this kind of rationalization, however. Certainly the Spirit operates upon the heart of the sinner through the message proclaimed, but there is a difference between resisting and blaspheming. While it is dangerous indeed to reject an appeal to commit one's life to the lordship of Jesus, the sin is not unforgivable, but unforgiven. If it were unforgivable, each person would be afforded but one opportunity to obey the gospel, and if he refused, he could never be forgiven. One who stubbornly persists in rejecting the call of God's grace will die in an unforgiven state because he dies in his sins. But his sins and stubbornness could have been forgiven at any time.

Blasphemy against the Spirit is not forgivable. It is unique, and its uniqueness lies in its nature and the object of the blasphemy. Why, then, do men ascribe so many and divergent actions to it? The answer is simple. They lift a statement out of its setting and, by isolating it from its Scriptural background, they can arbitrarily make it mean anything that seems rational to themselves. This is responsible for most of the misunderstanding in the religious realm.

None of the words of Jesus were spoken in a vacuum. None of His acts were performed by accident. Every passage of Scripture was originally given in a three-fold context of time (history), place (geography), and revelation. To ignore this context is to handle the Word of God unfairly and to reach unwarranted and unjustifiable conclusions. Let us consider what has become a thorny problem in exegesis from the Scriptural framework in which it appears.

At the time Jesus made the statement regarding the sin against the Holy Spirit, He was at the peak of His acclaim by the masses. "A great multitude from Galilee followed him, and from Judaea, and from Jerusalem, and from Idumaea, and from beyond Jordan; and they about Tyre and Sidon, a great

multitude, when they had heard what great things he did, came unto him" (Mark 3:7, 8; KJV). He told the disciples to keep a boat ready, to prevent His being crushed by the crowd. The record says, "For he had healed many; insomuch that they pressed upon him for to touch him, as many as had plagues" (v. 10). Mark especially refers to the fact that when He confronted those who were possessed by demons, the evil spirits would fall at His feet and cry aloud, "You are the Son of God."

All of this had a profound impact upon the common people and they refused to be dismissed. They surged around Jesus, wondering about and discussing His claims. When Jesus entered a house, the crowd pressed in until it was impossible for the disciples to eat. To add to the general excitement, a rumor was conveyed to Nazareth that Jesus had lost His mental faculties and was acting like a crazed person. "When his friends heard of it, they went out to lay hold on him: for they said, He is beside himself" (v. 21).

Among the more interested observers of this growing influence were the Pharisees and Sadducees. Their motives for trying to check it were different, however. The Sadducees were political opportunists, compromising with Rome and seeking to curb any movement that might develop into a revolution. Such would bring down swift punishment by the Roman legions, with a consequent loss of official positions, which were always tenuous in an occupied territory.

The Pharisees were the watchdogs of orthodoxy. Their concern was that the rabble (as they regarded the people) should not be led away from the body of rabbinical tradition by which their every move in life was regulated. Jesus was attached to no sect. He was neither Pharisee, Sadducee, nor Essene. He was not a product of any rabbinical school. He was from Nazareth, a despicable city away from the great centers of learning and culture. As the Pharisees saw Him, He was a mere carpenter, a descendant of peasant stock, and a rabble-rousing miracle

worker. Their chief concern was to keep Him from securing too large a following. They were willing to go to any lengths to do this. They knew the superstition and fears of the masses. Many of these no doubt resulted from an unwholesome mixture of Chaldean and Persian ideas (acquired during the exile) and legendary traditions of the rabbis.

It would hardly serve our immediate purpose to detail the often absurd fears of the people in the days of our Lord upon the earth. The *Shedim*, or evil spirits, lurked ever near, occupying the atmosphere, awaiting the moment to plague the unfaithful and forgetful. Whether the term *Shedim* is from a primitive root meaning "to fly about" or "to rebel" is now a question, but in those days men were never free from the concern that an evil spirit might move in upon them at any moment. The rabbis cautioned against certain things considered to be especially dangerous because of demons. It was unwise to walk between two palm trees growing more than six feet apart. It was improvident to borrow drinking water from a passerby, or to walk over water that had been poured out, or spilled upon the ground. The last danger could be averted by sprinkling dust upon the earth, or removing one's shoes and walking through barefoot.

Now we must give attention to another word with which our analysis must reckon: *Beelzebul*. There is no doubt that this is the correct term, rather than *Beelzebub*, for every passage of the New Covenant Scriptures in which it appears. It is probable that early translators sought to accommodate it to the Philistine term for the god of flies. Because of a somewhat kindred word in Hebrew, which means "to fertilize land with dung," some scholars have assumed that Beelzebul was "lord of dung," or, ruler of the unclean. Alfred Edersheim, the Jewish scholar, has pointed out that Zibbul actually means sacrificing to idols. Beelzebul would therefore be the same as lord or chief of idolatrous sacrificing, the worst and chief of all demons, presiding over and inciting to idolatry. Idolatry was specifically

forbidden by the first two Commandments of the Decalogue. To seduce to idolatry or false worship was regarded as the ultimate in disrespect for God. To accuse one of operating by the authority or under the power of Beelzebul was to league him with the very spirit of malevolence, as opposed to all righteousness and moral goodness.

With this bit of background of the circumstances under which Jesus operated, we are ready to investigate the events that called forth His denunciation of those who blasphemed against the Holy Spirit. For the purpose of bringing consistency into the interpretation, enabling one to check the Scriptural language, the discussion will be limited mainly to the language of the *Revised Standard Version***. Other renderings are used, if they make for greater clarity.**

The argument is centered primarily around the accounts found in Matthew 12:22-32 and Mark 3:22-30. I am assuming that these two passages cover the same incident and speech. Those who disagree will grant that my dealing with the text itself, which is the present concern, will be fair.

The incident began when a blind and dumb demonic was brought to Jesus. Jesus healed the man in the presence of the people, who attested that the demoniac both spoke and saw. This kind of sign could not be denied, and it created astonishment in the hearts of the beholders. In their amazement they began to ask one another, "'Can this be the Son of David?'" (Matthew 12:23). Because of this, the Pharisees, jealous for themselves and the law, said, "'It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons'" (v. 24). They could not deny that a miracle had occurred, but they could belittle it. It is obvious that they were not true to their own convictions, but spoke these words to keep the superstitious people from following Jesus. One of their own number, who was a ruler among them, had come to Jesus after dark, and confessed, "'Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God; for no

one can do these signs that you do, unless God is with him'" (John 3:2). The Pharisees knew that Jesus was not in league with the prince of demons. This was a ruse intended to counteract the influence of the Son of God with the common people.

Jesus demonstrated the absurdity of their accusation by three arguments. The first showed the folly of a power that would be antagonistic against itself. He said, "'Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand; and if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then will his kingdom stand?'" (Matthew 12:25, 26). One can but imagine the chagrin of the lawyers when this fallacy was pointed out to them publicly.

The second argument dealt with the inconsistency manifested in claiming that Jesus operated under the authority of Beelzebul in expelling demons, while students of the Pharisaic school also claimed to cast them out. The word "sons" here is employed for disciples or students. For example, the "sons" of the prophets were students of the prophets, who sought to learn from and imitate them.

In Judaism of that day, many teachings existed about the exorcising of evil spirits. Many persons believed that pronunciation of the "ineffable name" of God would drive demons forth, and there were various combinations of terms to be recited to put the *Shedim* to flight. Jesus did not enter into a debate as to the legitimacy of the claims of the disciples of the Pharisees. It was the contention of the Pharisees that their students could drive out demons, so the question was, if it required authority from the prince of demons to do so, were they operating in league with demons also. Jesus said, "'They shall be your judges'" (v. 27).

On the other hand, to admit that the Spirit of God drove out the demons was to admit that the kingdom of God had come upon them. The Jews believed a kingdom of darkness was

presided over by the prince of demons. If Jesus had been operating under the authority of that prince, the kingdom of darkness was predominant, but if He manifested the Spirit of God, the rule of Heaven was triumphing over Satan, laying his kingdom waste.

The third argument had to do with the relative strength required to subdue a man before plundering his house and dispossessing him. "'Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? Then indeed he may plunder his house'" (v. 29). In this example the strong man is Satan. His goods are represented by the demons infesting the bodies of unfortunate victims, such as the one who had been afflicted by blindness and loss of speech. The argument of Jesus is clear. Before He could cast out demons He would have needed to subdue Satan and gain control of his holdings and property. Satan would no more surrender his stronghold than a man would willingly let a marauder come upon his premises and throw his possessions into the street. The observers' admission that Jesus was driving out demons was also an admission that He had gained superiority over Satan.

These arguments presented a real dilemma to the Pharisees. If Jesus operated under the power of Beelzebul, Satan was fighting against his own forces, and his kingdom would disintegrate. If not, Jesus had entered in, bound Satan, and was despoiling his kingdom. The kingdom of Satan was doomed and the superiority of Jesus was admitted, regardless of which position His opposers assumed.

At this point, Jesus inserted a rather peculiar statement, according to Matthew. Its relevance is not seen at first glance. Jesus said, "'He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters'" (v. 30). A little thought will reveal that He was pointing out that there are but two kingdoms in the universe, by nature hostile toward each other. There was no cessation of warfare between them and no compromise. The

Son of God and the son of perdition had nothing in common. There was no concord between Christ and Belial, as Paul phrases it in 2 Corinthians 6:15. Jesus had nothing to do with demons, or with the prince of demons, except to defeat their every intent and purpose.

We are now ready for the statement relating to the sin of blaspheming against the Holy Spirit. "'Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. And whoever says a word against the Son of man will be forgiven; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come'" (Matthew 12:31, 32).

Without speaking it is impossible to commit the sin of blasphemy. Blasphemy is a sin of the tongue and not merely of the heart. Regardless of how wrong one may be in his thinking, blasphemy must be openly expressed. Our word "blasphemy" is not a translation. It is a transliteration of the Greek original which means "to speak reproachfully, to slander, calumniate, rail at, or revile." To blaspheme is to speak injuriously of that which is high or holy. Blasphemy is never justifiable, but it is forgivable upon proper repentance when directed against any other person or thing than the Holy Spirit. This is so, even if it involved Jesus. "'Whoever says a word against the Son of man will be forgiven'" (v. 32).

What is the unforgivable sin? According to the context, it is accrediting to Satan the power by which Jesus performed His wonderful works. It is saying that Jesus possessed an evil spirit rather than the Holy Spirit. This is made quite clear by Mark, who writes that Jesus uttered His warning about blasphemy against the Spirit, "For they had said, 'He has an unclean spirit'" (Mark 3:30). There may be more to the matter than a mere statement, however, for the motivation must not be forgotten.

If those who saw Jesus perform His wonderful works had actually believed, sincerely, that He was using the power of Satan to dislodge demons, they would not have been guilty of blaspheming against the Holy Spirit. Their verbal conclusion would not have constituted this sin. They would have been sadly mistaken and the conclusion would have been irrational; yet, with increasing knowledge they could have changed their minds and obtained forgiveness for their error.

The blasphemy against the Spirit is to deliberately attribute to Satan the power by which Jesus performed His miracles, against all evidence and for the purpose of deflecting the hearts of humble men and women from faith in Him. The utterance of the slander is simply the result of a malevolent heart, conspiring to defeat the very purpose for which Jesus came in the flesh. It is a willful decision to scatter what He has come to gather, and the statement is a lie born of the will to deceive. This raises several questions.

Why is this unprincipled calumniation of the Spirit so heinous? What places it in a category by itself as the only sin for which forgiveness is not provided? Why is it worse than every other sin and blasphemy, including speaking against the Son of man? A little reflection on the purpose of the Spirit in producing the miracles of Jesus may help to explain the matter.

In general, Jesus performed two kinds of works— intellectual and physical— to excite wonder and to produce faith in Him as the Messiah. The first consisted of predictions as to the future, and faith in this case was deferred until the event came to pass. When an occurrence transpired and the mind recalled that Jesus had previously predicted it exactly as it happened, faith was kindled in His claim to have divine prescience. "'I tell you this now, before it takes place, that when it does take place you may believe that I am he'" (John 13:19).

Physical miracles were of the kind to incite immediate

recognition of supernatural power. Thus the statement, "And when they saw these things, they believed" expresses the idea that the validation of the act was in its nature. It was visual, and the impact was immediate. Physical miracles had a two-fold motivation, resulting from compassion for the suffering and the need for a criterion by which to establish the divinity of a mission. The relief of physical pain or infirmity was intended to provide an incentive to believe.

Belief in Jesus was not a mere exercise of consciousness, but a matter of life and death. He said to the Jews, "'I told you that you would die in your sins, for you will die in your sins unless you believe that I am he'" (8:24). Jesus also appealed to His works as visual testimony to occasion faith: "'But the testimony which I have is greater than that of John; for the works which the Father has granted me to accomplish, these very works which I am doing, bear me witness that the Father has sent me'" (5:36). Again, "'If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me; but if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father'" (10:37, 38).

John 20:30, 31 is pregnant with meaning: "Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name." It is evident that the Spirit exercised selectivity in placing on record the various miracles of which we may read. Out of the great number of signs Jesus did, a sufficient number were selected to convince any honest heart that He was the Messiah and God's Son. A dishonest heart would not believe in Him regardless of the amount of proof produced.

The signs Jesus did by the Holy Spirit were designed to make believers in Him. A deliberate attempt to frustrate faith by

false accusations as to the source of power would therefore be a sin of the deepest dye. It would amount to a malicious conspiracy to deprive men of eternal life because of personal jealousy and hostility. One might honestly question the claims of Jesus, and might verbalize doubts about the authenticity and genuineness of Jesus' words as recorded. This is not unforgivable. Further research and study could well demonstrate one's error and bring about real reformation. To behold the signs done to produce faith, and against all observation, knowledge, and conscience, assign that power to Satan for the specific purpose of destroying faith is to condemn mankind once and for all to eternal death.

Why is there no forgiveness for this malign act? The simplest answer is that God has placed it outside the pale of divine forgiveness. It is beyond the limit set for grace. It is the one crime against divine majesty that is outside the circle. This does not exhaust the subject, however. The kind of heart that would engage in such reprehensible conduct will not repent. It is the heart of stone or flint that would willingly see the world of mankind destroyed to justify its own cruelty and gratify its own inhumanity.

The question always arises, "What if one in this condition should repent?" This need not trouble us. One who is dead to love for all truth, and has crucified in his consciousness all respect for evidence will not believe. Faith is the belief of testimony, and one who has examined the testimony and defiantly assigned it to the realm of the damned has no ground left for honest faith. He has sinned away his day of grace!

Can men commit the unpardonable sin today? The answer, I think, is that it is possible, but not very probable. That it is possible can be deduced from the words of Jesus, "'Whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come'" (Matthew 12:32). Among the Jews who were present when these words were spoken, the expression

"the age to come," referred to the Messianic age, the time when, according to their thinking, the Messiah would sit upon His throne and exercise universal dominion. There is no reason to believe that Jesus employed the term in any other than the accepted sense, just as there is no reason to think that He endorsed the traditional ideas with which the rabbis had invested it.

"This age" refers to the dispensation in which Jesus lived upon the earth. "The age to come" refers to the dispensation in which we now live. There would be little value in applying this latter expression to the age following the general resurrection from the dead, for no unforgiven sins will be forgiven then. It is my conviction that one can commit the sin in this age and if so, it is as unforgivable now as it was when Jesus said it.

We should not allow the matter to rest here without making a few comments about an attempted current application of the remarks of Jesus. In our own time an interest has been aroused in the work of the Holy Spirit, with the result that many persons claim to have received special gifts of the Spirit, to enable them to perform signs and wonders. Radio stations specializing in "gospel broadcasting" have one program after another, from sunrise to sunset, in which men use their alleged gifts as drawing-cards to solicit contributions and plead for offerings to keep them on the air.

A frequent tactic with which to ward off any criticism and to stifle any protest is to threaten that those who question the sincerity of the speakers may be guilty of blaspheming against the Holy Spirit. There is no attempt here to enter into the controversy as to whether or not the "charismatic gifts" are for this generation. That is a study that lies outside the scope of the volume. Honest doubts about the qualifications, objectives, and character of some of the "radio evangelists" is not sinning against the Spirit. By no stretch of the imagination can honest investigation of their claims be remotely connected to what Jesus

said.

During my lifetime I have found certain individuals who were deeply troubled by the thought that they might have committed the sin against the Holy Spirit, and were condemned to a state of hopelessness here and of condemnation hereafter. Without fail, I have found that the real trouble was ignorance of what Jesus was talking about. Frequently the problem resulted from misinformation derived from an overzealous exhorter who sought to frighten the person into a public response to his call. A simplistic, but relatively safe, criterion is that anyone who is worried about having blasphemed the Spirit has not done so, for the kind of person Jesus described would never worry about it.

I have canvassed rather extensively what I regard as the Scriptural teaching related to the blasphemy against the Spirit. It seems apparent that the sin does not refer to an attitude toward a mere influence, impersonal force or energy, but consists of the slander of a divine personality through which God's purpose is accomplished in the universe of His creation. Yet, if I stop the discussion here, at least two other passages will go unexplained. Many have equated these with the unforgivable sin of which Jesus spoke. Having written at this length on the theme, it seems injudicious to ignore the other problem passages, so I will deal with them as peripheral questions, not specifically related to the central concern of this work, and yet deserving of scrutiny and attention.

APOSTASY

The first passage is found in Hebrews 6:4-8 and reads as follows: "For it is impossible to restore again to repentance those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they then commit apostasy, since they crucify the Son

of God on their own account and hold him up to contempt. For land which has drunk the rain that often falls upon it, and brings forth vegetation useful to those for whose sake it is cultivated, receives a blessing from God. But if it bears thorns and thistles, it is worthless and near to being cursed; its end is to be burned."

On the basis of the statement of the impossibility of restoring to repentance those who are in the category here described, thousands of persons think of apostasy as the unforgivable sin. Again, the problem lies in ignoring the context. Scriptural context may be either immediate and direct, or remote. The first has to do with the setting adjacent to a statement, either preceding or following it, or both. The remote context has to do with the aim and purpose of a letter or section that governs the relationship of all that appears in the entire frame of reference.

A careful study of the entire Hebrew letter will reveal that it was written to Palestinian Jews, as the title indicates. It was written during a time when the temple was still standing in Jerusalem and the priests were daily ministering within its precincts. The addressees had accepted Jesus as the Messiah, but because of the appeal of the pomp and pageantry of the temple ritual, or because of persecution and opposition, were defecting to Judaism and abandoning the faith of the gospel. The whole purpose of this letter was to strengthen them to stand firm, "For we share in Christ, if only we hold our first confidence firm to the end" (Hebrews 3:14).

The method of encouragement was to point out that in Christ we have something far better than was found under Moses and in the Old Covenant. The word "better" occurs thirteen times, and in each instance points up the superiority of some feature in Christ over what Judaism had to offer. It must be remembered that the first-century Jewish believer who forgot the Lord and returned to his previous relationship, discounted

the value of the blood of Christ. He once again placed his trust in inferior animal sacrifices, the blood of bulls and goats, which could never take away sins (10:4).

There is a difference between one's "leaving the church" or "going back into the world," as the phraseology of our day often states it, and one's going back into dead works from which the conscience has been purified. Modern "drop-outs" frequently affirm that they believe in Jesus as much as they ever did, but, because of the weakness of the flesh, they cannot live up to the responsibility of being a Christian. The letter to the Hebrews was not addressed to individuals like this, but to those who have "spurned the Son of God, and profaned the blood of the covenant by which they were sanctified and outraged the Spirit of grace" (10:29).

With this preliminary survey we are prepared to look at the passage under discussion. These Hebrews had once been enlightened, which in this instance refers to the illumination of God's purpose in Christ. "In him was life, and the life was the light of men" (John 1:4). They had left the moonlight age with its shadows, symbols, and types, and were translated into the sunlight dispensation of reality and fulfillment. The situation was like one's leaving a storm cellar lighted by a single flickering candle and coming into a house aglow with fluorescent lighting.

The Christians had "tasted the heavenly gift." The word "taste," as used in the Scriptures, does not mean simply to sample. The term means to experience or share in something. The "heavenly gift" does not refer to the Spirit, which is expressly mentioned in the following statement. It no doubt has to do with that quality of life gained through reception of the Lord Jesus Christ, Heaven's greatest gift to humanity.

They had "become partakers of the Holy Spirit." The promise of God to His people through the prophets was that He would grant them His Spirit to dwell in them. We discussed at

length the assurance Jesus gave before His departure from earth that He would send another Helper. Accordingly, those who heard the word of truth, the gospel of salvation, and believed in Jesus, were said to be "sealed with the promised Holy Spirit" (Ephesians 1:13). Under the legal dispensation of Moses, the Spirit invested certain men with the gift of prophetic utterance, leaving the great body of people without direct association with the Spirit. In the gospel age the Spirit dwells in all who are in Christ, and the Hebrews who had been the first to hear the good news had been so blessed.

They had "tasted the goodness of the word of God." The gospel, a message of joy and hope, brought comfort to the sick and assurance to the dying. It did not require dead sacrifices nor enjoin the killing of animals. Rather, it emphasized the giving of the body of the believer as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, as a rational and understandable service. The contrast was vividly stated in one verse of the Hebrew letter. "For if the sprinkling of defiled persons with the blood of goats and bulls and with the ashes of a heifer sanctifies for the purification of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God" (Hebrews 9:13, 14).

The Christians had experienced "the powers of the age to come" (Hebrews 6:5). Again, this refers to the Jewish concept of the Messianic age. The writer to the Hebrews regarded that age as having arrived. The Son of God was sitting at the right hand of the Father. Angels, archangels, authorities, and powers were made subject to Him. God had highly exalted Him and given Him a name above every name. He was made head of the community of the called-out ones. The "age to come" had arrived!

The writer declares that if those who have participated in all of these blessings should now "commit apostasy," it is

impossible to restore them to repentance. The word rendered "apostasy" is from a term meaning to fall away. It refers to an abandonment of the faith, a denial of the validity of the facts upon which belief is founded, an utter desertion of the truth of the gospel. Such desertion is not the result of ignorance, but is a deliberate step taken with eyes wide open to the truth.

Those who fall away crucify the Son of God afresh and hold Him in contempt. How do they do this? The answer is simple. Jesus was condemned to be crucified because He testified that He was the Messiah. Those who lived upon earth in His day preferred their legalistic ritual with the earthly gifts and animal sacrifices. They considered Jesus a threat to their traditions. Men's forsaking Him and going back to the shadows of the law was like crucifying Jesus anew and making it appear that His death was empty and useless.

Defection from the faith under such circumstances gave the enemies of the cross an excuse for rejoicing and an opportunity for ridicule. It weakened the morale of the saints. The very name of Jesus became the butt of scurrilous remarks and was slandered in the eyes of the heathen populace.

Those who forsook Jesus to return to legalistic bondage were likened to cultivated land. A farm that drinks in the rain and repays the tillage of its fields with fruitful crops is blessed of God because of its abundant yield. Sterile or barren ground, or land that produces only a matted growth of thorns and thistles, is fit only for execration and will be burned over to destroy its noxious growth. This last is an apt picture of those who have received every blessing from Heaven, only to use the strength to disgrace and disparage the cause for which Jesus died.

Apostasy, as serious as it may be, is not the blasphemy against the Spirit. One may fall away without overtly slandering the Spirit. The record does not say that such a person cannot repent, rather that it is impossible for another to lead him to

repentance. The reason is understood when we remember that every act is the result of motivation. The apostate has listened to and examined every motive leading to repentance. He has experienced every blessing and benefit accruing from relationship with Christ. When he turns his back upon all of these, no other appeal remains that can restore him.

We must retain a clear distinction between an apostate and an ordinary backslider. One may become a drop-out without renouncing Jesus. It is possible to become negligent and to forsake responsibility without denying the validity of the claims of God upon one's life, or the efficacy of the blood of Christ as a cleansing agent for sin. Expositors need to be careful that they do not discourage those who could resume the yoke of Christ by making it appear that they are in such a state they cannot do so.

THE SIN UNTO DEATH

Another passage that presents some real problems is 1 John 5:16, 17. Here John mentions the "sin unto death." *TheRevised Standard Version* designates it a "mortal" sin. Many persons have concluded that this is the sin against the Holy Spirit, of which Jesus spoke. I do not believe the two are identical, and I shall briefly discuss why I do not.

"If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death" (KJV). In verse 15 John had given assurance that we will be heard in our petitions to God because of our faith in His Son. John then qualifies this by distinguishing between a "sin unto death" and one not "unto death." This has occasioned much conjecture upon the part of commentators. Many different views have been expressed. Albert Barnes regarded the "sin unto death" as the unpardonable sin. This view was also shared by

Philip Doddridge. A lengthy dissent was registered to their view, however, by Dr. James Macknight in his *Apostolical Epistles*.

Dr. Macknight held that in the early age of Christianity, God punished some men for their sins directly with physical disease or infirmity, and in aggravated cases, with death. His position was that if someone in that age who was possessed of the gift of healing saw one smitten of God and could determine that the punishment of death was not assessed, he could pray for that person and God would honor the gift by granting life to the one so smitten.

There can be little doubt that God punished certain sins with death. This was true in the case of Ananias and Sapphira, who conspired together to lie about the amount of money they received for the sale of their property (Acts 5:1-10). It is also true that, because of irregularities in observation of the Lord's Supper, some at Corinth were smitten with sickness and others suffered death (1 Corinthians 11:30). Here Paul declares that those who eat and drink with the wrong motive, eat and drink punishment to themselves. He added, "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." Here is the full text of Dr. Macknight's treatment of the passage under consideration:

> **Because it was necessary to the successful propagation of the gospel, that its professors in the first age should be remarkably holy, God so ordered it that the open miscarriages of individuals, were often punished with visible temporal judgments. So Paul told the Corinthians, who had been guilty of great irregularities in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, 1 Corinthians 11:30, "For this cause many of you are sick, and some of you are dead." These judgments, being public, had no doubt a great influence in restraining the first Corinthians from sin. On the other hand to encourage those to repent who by their sins had brought on themselves mortal diseases, there were in the first age, persons, who being endowed**

> **with the gift of healing diseases miraculously, (1 Corinthians 12:9), were moved by the Holy Ghost to heal the sick, who had repented of the sins which had brought on them the diseases under which they were laboring. We may therefore believe, that when John directed *any one*, who saw his brother sinning a sin not unto death, to ask God to give him life, he did not mean any ordinary Christian, but any spiritual man who was endowed with the gift of healing diseases; and that the brother for whom the spiritual man was to ask life, was not every brother who had sinned, but the brother only who had been punished for his sin with some mortal disease, but who having repented of his sin, it was not a sin unto death: and that the life to be asked for such a brother was not eternal life, but a miraculous recovery from the mortal disease under which he was laboring.[9]**

W. E. Vine concurs in the view expressed by Macknight. In his book, *The Epistles of John*, he writes as follows:

> **The phrase "unto death" signifies "tending towards death," rather than the actual condition of being in death. Accordingly, this would seem to rule out the view that the state referred to is that in which a child of God has lost all communion with the Lord, for that would involve a condition of spiritual death, already experienced, instead of that which tends toward it.**
>
> **As to the subject of death, the only conclusion that seems possible is that the reference is to physical death. That is spoken of as the result of certain sins, as in the case of Ananias and Sapphira, and that of the moral delinquent in 1 Corinthians 5, and again in the case of those who partake of the Lord's Supper unworthily (1 Corinthians 11:30), where sleep refers to physical death.[10]**

To me this seems to harmonize best with the circumstances and with the Scriptures. If God visited sickness upon a brother because he had sinned, and another had the power of discernment by which he could determine that the divine decree

did not involve death as a part of the punishment, he could pray for the sick man and life would be granted to the man as a result of the petition. He would not have to continue in his punishment. "The prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven" (James 5:15).

On the other hand, if the sin was such that God decreed death, or capital punishment, prayer would be unavailing. "There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it" (1 John 5:16; KJV). Of course, it would have been useless for Peter to have prayed for Ananias and Sapphira. Three hours after Ananias died for his guilt, Peter told Sapphira she would suffer the same fate because she was equally involved in the sin. God has no double standard.

I do not think the record means to imply that there was a specific sin "unto death," any more than there was a specific sin "not unto death." The difference lay, not in the overt act, but in the motivation and nature of the one committing the sin. Ananias and Sapphira died because of a lie growing out of a conspiracy. The Corinthians died because of their partisan debasement of the Lord's Supper. Many commentators think that "the destruction of the flesh" referred to in the case of the blatant fornicator (1 Corinthians 5:5) meant a death decree when he was turned over to Satan.

Does God still directly visit sickness and death upon men and women who are guilty of kindred sins? Although my answer will not satisfy everyone who reads this book, I am not hesitant to say I do not believe that He does. In the primitive era of the community of the called-out ones, a directness of dealing was essential. This directness is not now essential to the fulfillment of the divine purpose. At that time there were no New Covenant Scriptures to circulate as guidelines for spiritual and moral behavior, nor to remind men that they would be "reserved unto the judgment of that great day."

Every social institution requires certain measures in its inception and foundational era, that it may later outgrow or discard. Kingdoms and nations mature as do the individuals who compose them. As succeeding generations develop an increasing sense of responsibility, methods of punishing derelictions of duty may change. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever" does not mean God limits His methods today to what He did in previous centuries. He is no longer obligated to relieve the hunger of five thousand persons with five loaves and two fish. Neither should we think Him obligated to grant men and women the same gifts as He did in the formative stages of the church. Indeed, this is one sign that few "miracle workers" lay claim to performing, although it would be a tremendous asset to missionaries in famine-stricken areas.

I do not consider the sin "unto death" as being the blasphemy against the Spirit. I cannot conceive of the sin against the Spirit as being a reflection against, or a rejection of, a mere influence in the world. The Scriptures seem to indicate that blasphemy is an assault upon and a false accusation of a divine Person, so grave in nature as to place the one who commits it outside the domain of God's forgiveness.

What Is Life in the Spirit?

Contents

Whatever we may conclude about the nature of the Spirit as recorded in Scripture, if our personal lives are not transformed, our study becomes only an academic matter in which there is no spiritual profit. Contemplation of the blessings conferred through the indwelling of the Spirit is thrilling! While space will not permit an exhaustive treatise of the theme, I want to share with you some of the things we may read in the New Covenant letters.

Ephesians 1:13, 14 informs us that we are sealed by the Spirit, and the Spirit is God's guarantee that we shall come into our inheritance. These two verses are pregnant with hope for the followers of Jesus. The full text says, "In him you also, who have heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and have believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, which is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it."

Here we learn that only believers in Christ receive the Spirit as a seal. Only believers will share in the inheritance. This agrees with the words of Jesus, who said the world cannot receive the Spirit because it does not see Him or know Him (John 14:17). In the same verse He declares, concerning His disciples, "You know him, for he dwells with you, and will be in you." Companionship and intimacy are indicated by this expression.

Belief follows the hearing of the word of truth, here defined as the gospel of salvation. In Romans 10:15, 16, the gospel is classified as good news, or glad tidings, and verse 17 says, "So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ." To preach Christ is to proclaim the historical facts related to what He did for men who were lost. Paul declares that the gospel he preached, by which men were saved, was simply that "Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:3, 4).

The response of the honest mind to testimony rendered credible is belief of that testimony, faith in what is affirmed. The gospel of Christ is testimony about a Person. It is designed to establish the fact that that Person is the Messiah promised by the prophets. Faith in Christ is belief that He is who He claimed to be. It is more than an acknowledgment of the historicity of the facts, or mental assent to their accuracy. A detached intellectual admission of the factuality is not sufficient. Faith embraces a relationship with the object of belief. Those who receive the Spirit are those who have "believed in him."

The Spirit leads men to salvation by means of a message. It is a message preached by men, heard by men, and believed by men. No theory of salvation by direct operation on the sinner's heart, apart from the Word proclaimed, is given any credence in the Scriptures. There is no historical validation for any person's coming to Christ where missionaries have not taken the message. The Spirit has never created believers except through the announcement of the good news by "earthen vessels." When men react to the testimony by believing in Christ and pledging allegiance to Him, the Spirit moves into the heart where Jesus dwells by faith. There He takes up His abode to act as a seal. The word "seal" is from *sphragis*, a seal or signet that indicated ownership or authenticity. This is important and should not be casually dismissed. Sometimes a seal was in the form of a ring on

which was engraved an initial or other identifying mark for stamping documents. We still speak of a "signet ring," which is one bearing the initial of the wearer.

In the days of the apostles, a seal was also used for branding slaves, often on the forehead and in the right hand. Such a brand identified the slave as the possession of the owner. Such a use of the word is found in Revelation 7:2, where an angel appeared from the east with "the seal of the living God." He halted all proceedings until he had sealed the servants of God upon their foreheads and thus marked them as belonging to Him. In Revelation 9:4 mention is made of the suffering endured by those who do not have the seal of God upon their foreheads.

The promised Holy Spirit abiding within the Christian is proof of God's ownership of his person. "But you are not in the flesh, you are in the Spirit, if the Spirit of God really dwells in you. Any one who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him" (Romans 8:9). The validation of one's claim to be dwelling on the spiritual plane is the indwelling Spirit. The proof that one belongs to Jesus is the seal of the Spirit. One who is conscious that the inner chamber of his being is occupied by this royal Guest need never feel lonely or forsaken. In a remarkable chapter devoted to our relationship to the Spirit, the apostle reaches the height of human thought in three tremendous questions: "What then shall we say to this? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, will he not also give us all things with him?" (vv. 31, 32).

The Spirit does not simply mark us as being the possession of God, but also acts as a guarantee of our inheritance. With a little thought the reason becomes apparent. The Spirit does not dwell in any except God's children. The Spirit within is proof that the person is a child of God, and an heir of the Father's bounty. In the flesh it is impossible to receive the full measure of the inheritance, but the Spirit is given as a bond of assurance

that God will not withhold anything from us.

In our day the word "inheritance" is used for a patrimony received upon the death of a father, but that is not the meaning indicated in the New Covenant Scriptures. Here the word strictly means to receive by lot, and then to receive and possess as one's own. In Matthew 19:29 Jesus speaks of eternal life as an inheritance. This was the life made possible in the eternal kingdom of God, when all that offends or causes sin shall have been eliminated. It is more than unbroken existence. It is also unending joy or bliss.

In Ephesians 5:5 Paul lists certain characters who have no such inheritance in God's kingdom. Those who are walking in the Spirit have such an inheritance awaiting, but they cannot now enjoy it to the fullest because of the limitations of the flesh. The present life is material, subject to decay and mortification. "I tell you this, brethren: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable" (1 Corinthians 15:50).

The indwelling Spirit is the divine guarantee that we shall be changed and brought into the glorious experience of eternal existence. We are not going to be frustrated and defeated. We will not be forsaken. "But our commonwealth is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power which enables him even to subject all things to himself" (Philippians 3:20, 21).

The word rendered "guarantee" in modern versions, and "earnest" in the *King James Version***, is** *arrabon***. It was a business term, probably used by Phoenician traders and pawnbrokers who introduced it among the Greeks. It referred to earnest money or other valuable consideration deposited by a prospective purchaser, and forfeited by him if he did not fulfill the agreement. Eventually it came to mean a pledge to carry out**

a covenant, and in the New Covenant Scriptures it is used only of God's assurance to believers, and never the reverse. In modern Greek "guarantee" is the word for an engagement ring.

From this it will be seen that, although God cannot bestow upon us the full blessing of eternal life while we are in the physical body, He has given us the Holy Spirit as an earnest or pledge that His covenant is certain. I need have no qualm or fear as to my inheritance because the Spirit is God's pledge of my eternal blessedness. As I now share in the Spirit, so will I share in life forever!

The ultimate purpose of human existence is to share in the glory of God. Peter wrote to the persecuted saints that the God of all grace had called them to His eternal glory in Christ. After they had suffered a little while, eternal glory would be theirs (1 Peter 5:10). He told the elders who were faithful in their responsibility they would receive "a crown that fadeth not away" (1 Peter 5:4; KJV). Paul wrote to the Corinthians that the momentary affliction they were enduring was preparing for them "an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison" (2 Corinthians 4:17). What a comfort to the believer!

To guarantee this culmination of the divine plan for our existence the Spirit abides within us. No one need go down under the burdens of life. Sickness, pain, persecution— God knows about them all, and they will pass away, while for God's children there will be an eternal day. God is in us as the hope of glory.

THE INNER STRENGTH

All of us have known individuals who seem to possess an inner reservoir of strength that never runs dry. Perhaps it is a person against whose frail body all the storms of life have been directed. Poverty, ill health, loss of loved ones— all of these combine to defeat every plan for overcoming the negative forces of life. What is the secret of the overcoming life, the triumphant

existence? It cannot be a superior education, for many of these persons have little formal education. It cannot be financial power, for they are often in the throes of penury.

Such people are a constant rebuke to those who talk about luck or fortune making the difference between success or failure. In his book, *On Being a Real Person*, Harry Emerson Fosdick discusses the need for organizing those factors out of which personality can be formed. He points out that we have these factors by nature. After mentioning the various things we need to overcome depression, he deals with the ultimate strength, telling his readers that those whose only method of coping with problems is to rely upon their own strength will eventually face up to a situation where such strength is inadequate and such a method inapplicable.

I know a man who illustrates this very thing. He was once a university instructor, honored and respected by his colleagues, well known for his brilliance. Before he was near retirement age, a series of reverses set in, and these would have ruined a lesser man. His wife was stricken with a lingering disease, and he was forced during a period of many months to watch her die. Left alone, he disposed of his home and moved into an apartment. While he was away on a trip, the building caught fire from faulty wiring, destroying everything he possessed, including his valuable books and manuscripts. These alone represented almost a lifetime of research and writing. Then he became aware of a nervous condition that affected his mobility and disturbed his memory. Finally he had to be placed in a geriatric center where aged patients all about him were awaiting death. Yet, when I went to see him, he was so cheerful and out-going that he actually helped me. He was alert and interested in what I was doing, and made it appear that all the things that happened to him were really blessings in disguise.

When I could stand it no longer I bluntly asked him what was behind his cheerful attitude. (One of the doctors had told me

that this man had transformed the hospital by the radiance of his faith and hope.) He told me the story himself.

He always had been a believer in God, but when he came to the realization that he was alone, sick, and would have to make a complete change of life, he decided to approach the problem with the dynamic of faith. He chose a day to fast and prepare his mind for God's will. He sat down to read the entire book of Psalms to let the courage and hope in these ancient songs of praise seep into his being. He underlined Psalm 121:7, 8: "The Lord will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life. The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and for evermore." He chose this for his motto.

Having walked through the aisles of the book, this once-famous university professor got down on his knees and began to supplicate for God's care. He prayed that God would grant him inward power great enough to overcome every obstacle and enable him to be resigned to the divine will. These are his words: "As I prayed I began to sense a new strength in me that was not my own. I felt a kinship with a force from outside, beyond myself. I retired and slept soundly. I awakened refreshed, confident that the Spirit of God would supply my every need. I believe that during that day of reading and meditation I actually made contact with the power of the Spirit to sustain."

I became convinced that I was seeing a living demonstration of that for which Paul petitioned in Ephesians 3:14-19. Accordingly, the passage took on a new and fuller meaning for me, and I have been helped immeasurably by thinking about it seriously and often. Here it is for your contemplation, and the best way to share in its wonderful meaning is to savor each clause slowly and carefully:

"For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be

strengthened with might through his Spirit in the inner man, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have power to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fulness of God."

The human mind is staggered when it seeks to embrace the meaning of this remarkable statement. Who possesses a vocabulary rich enough to describe what it means to be filled with all the fullness of God? Paul has just written that the faithful are built into the holy temple of the Lord, for a dwelling place for the Spirit, and now he assures them that they are recipients of the divine fullness. All that is God's belongs to the saints while they are here, on the conditions enunciated by the apostle.

The first item of the petition is that believers may be strengthened with might by the Spirit in the inner man. No one who accepts the Scripture as a divine revelation can doubt that the human being consists of both an outer and inner man. In Romans 7:22, 23, Paul identifies the inmost self with the mind or heart. It is possible for one of God's children to grow stronger in the faith even as he grows weaker in the body. The Spirit does not abide in us to keep the flesh always youthful. The passing of years takes a toll of the flesh. The promise is that though our outer nature wears away our inner nature is being renewed every day (2 Corinthians 4:16).

The versatile Greek language was especially endowed with words for "power." Two of these are found in the terms "strengthened" and "might." The first is from *kratos*, power that is manifested or applied. The root from which it is derived means to perfect or complete, and was connected with creative ability or energy.

"Might" is from *dunamis*, familiar to us in such English words as dynamic, dynamo, and dynamite. When used in contrast with other synonyms, it generally referred to inherent power. In this instance it signifies the power that is natural to the Spirit of God.

With these facts before us, it is apparent that the apostle was asking God to manifest the divine dynamic, the spirit of creative energy and power in the lives of the saints and to do so on the basis of the riches of His glory. This means nothing less than the fact that believers in Christ Jesus, filled with the Spirit, are furnished the power to do all that God expects of them in the universe. Instead of being weak, vacillating creatures, battered by the winds of fate, they are more victorious than conquerors, through Him who loved us.

Sometimes we speak in awe of the Christian heroes who have arisen in times of crisis to leave their marks upon the world and the church. Almost invariably, these were common men reared in humble circumstances. They met the needs of the hour when they realized that God dwelt in them through His Spirit, providing them the power to offset the evil forces that confronted them. The same Spirit abides in us all. We are not all called to become reformers like Luther and Zwingli, but we are called to serve in our localities and according to our capacities. For this, God provides an inner dynamic that cannot know defeat.

The tragedy of our generation is wasted lives because of late awakening. We discover the royal provision too late to employ it effectively. The creative energy that framed this majestic universe dwells in us and is ours to use. A remarkable statement is found in Ephesians 1:19, 20, in which Paul asserts that the same power God used to raise Jesus from the dead is ours now: "And what is the immeasurable greatness of his power in us who believe, according to the working of his great might which he accomplished in Christ when he raised him from

the dead and made him sit at his right hand in the heavenly places."

What a startling difference it would make in our Christian witness today, if we actually believed in the dynamic strength of the indwelling Spirit. Sermons would catch on fire. Churches would march with zeal. Homes would be transformed. How sad it is to see men and women living in spiritual poverty when the Father has deposited a great treasure to our account out of the riches of His glory. We need not beg for this power. It is ours now! We do not have to plead with God to do what He has already done. Having power available in a house will not provide light until we plug in to the power. That is all we need to do now through faith and absolute trust in God.

The apostle prayed "that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." The word "dwell" is used of abiding relationships. Another word is employed for one who drops in for a casual visit. "Dwell" is used to signify one who moves in as a permanent part of the household. Jesus seeks to become one with us, to establish himself as the guiding factor in life. Faith is the reaching out of the human heart to seal the relationship by which Heaven becomes real to us.

Paul also would have those who are in Christ possess the ability to grasp the potential of that love which is the most powerful force in the universe. In order to do this they must be rooted and grounded in love. Although both of these have to do with foundational matters, they regard the life of the disciple of Christ from different perspectives.

"Rooted" makes us think of our lives as growing and developing plants. This is a common metaphor throughout the Bible! Men are often spoken of as trees planted by the divine hand. Often the trees used in such symbolism are fruit trees, and the kind of soil in which they are planted will help to determine the quality of fruit produced. It is essential that we put down the

roots of faith into that love which can stand against all erosive forces. "Love bears all things and endures all things."

"Grounded" makes us consider human life as a building or structure. This picture also occurs frequently in Scripture. A building is as secure as its foundation, and no foundation is more solid than enduring love. The love here mentioned is not an emotion or sentiment, but an act of will. It is never accidental or incidental. It is purposeful and voluntary. And it is always active, never passive.

We must start out with faith and love, and we must never outgrow or abandon either. Everything that is said must be spoken in faith and love. Everything that is done must be performed in faith and love. We must begin by going down into the soil of love. We must continue by growing up in love. The Spirit dwelling within us is a royal guest in a temple making all of this possible. Indeed, the Spirit is the very source of that love, providing a hope that will never end in disappointment or disillusionment. "And hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us" (Romans 5:5).

God's love is not our love for God; it is rather the love that God is (1 John 4:16). The testimony is plain: "Love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God; for God is love" (4:7, 8). If we would be like God, if we would give evidence that we have been born of God and know God, we must manifest the love of God. We cannot develop or generate this love while we are caught up in the human predicament. The fleshly nature— selfish, egotistical, and egocentric— rebels against genuine concern for the involvement in the needs of others. It always asks, "What is in it for me?" Its philosophy is, "Let him get his like I got mine." The fleshly nature (or selfishness) is the attitude of the priest and Levite, not that of the good Samaritan.

To turn over a new leaf is not enough. We must turn up with a new life. This means that there must be a change from the human nature to the divine, and this is the work of the Spirit. "His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, that through these you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of passion, and become partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:3, 4).

If you open your heart and life to the ministrations of the Spirit of God, your changed life will be one of the greatest blessings that you have ever known. You will become more like Jesus, and the divine love flowing through your personality will touch and change and cleanse those around you. Members of your own family, the people with whom you work, your friends and neighbors— all will recognize that you are living on a different plane, and that life has taken on a new perspective. God made you and He wants you to be a vessel fit for the use for which He designed you.

If you are a physician you must become God's practitioner. If you are a truck driver you must become God's truck driver. The Bible knows nothing about "professional ministers." It recognizes the work of "ministering professionals." College teachers, farmers, dentists, taxi drivers, nurses, and housewives must all have the same vocation or calling: the calling of God. What they do to make a living is not their vocation, but their avocation. God calls you to serve where you are, but He does not call you to flounder around helplessly. He furnishes the power by which you can fulfill your purpose.

You do not need to quit what you are doing to "enter the ministry." You entered the ministry when you came into Christ. The power to perform that ministry was yours from the moment Christ, through the Spirit, entered you. Recognition of this will

produce a sense of happiness and well-being you never knew before. Open your life to God's will and purpose. Tune your personality to vibrate in unison with the divine. You will find that life will take on a completely new dimension, and your feet will be planted on higher ground.

Perhaps nothing is more detrimental to the cause of Christ than the idea that some of God's people should be urged to enter "full-time service." The very term suggests that the great majority are only part-time servants. This has led to the concept that those who volunteer "full time" must have a greater degree of dedication and commitment than others. Even their behavior and style of life must be different. They must deny themselves certain things counted as luxuries, while others can pile them up. They are expected to live dynamic and energetic lives for Jesus while those who support them can exist in a powerless spiritual condition.

This is foreign to the Scriptures. It is not only unscriptural but antiscriptural. The idea of asking Christians to volunteer for full-time work for Jesus after they have been in Him for ten years is absurd. No one can enlist for part-time work in the kingdom of God. No provision is made for goldbricks or fill-in laborers. In Christ, life is service, and service is life. One who does not enlist full time is preparing to be dead the greater part of the time!

The Spirit dwells in every child of God and dwells in all of them for the same purpose, though not for the same function. The function of each is determined by his ability, talent, or gift, coupled with opportunity. The purpose of the Spirit is to furnish each one the dynamic to accomplish the work for which he is adapted. There are no useless members. God has added each to the body as He pleases.

A mistaken view exists about making a witness for Jesus. Some persons feel they must quit their employment in order to

obey God's Word for their lives. If one is working in an endeavor that is sinful in itself, or in which his conscience condemns him, he should get out of it. But one who makes his living in a legitimate business is working for God. The same Word that urges faithfulness to God also says, "Study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; that ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing" (1 Thessalonians 4:11, 12; KJV).

This is the instruction of the Spirit, and surely He will empower those who heed it. Some may feel called to leave an occupation and preach the Word of God to those who have not heard it. This is good. Others who may not have the ability to do that may remain in the shop or office. One is no more a minister of God than the other. They simply serve in different places, but all must serve in the Spirit.

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Closely akin to this is the teaching of God's revelation on the fruit of the Spirit. The word for fruit is *karpos*, defined as that which is produced by the inherent energy of a living organism. In a spiritual sense, W. E. Vine says that it is "the visible expression of power working inwardly and invisibly, the character of the fruit being evidence of the character of the power producing it."

In His dissertation on the Spirit as a helper, Jesus inserted the metaphor of the vine and the branches (John 15:1-10). In this appropriate illustration God is the gardener, and Jesus the true vine. The branches are His followers. "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples" (John 15:8; KJV). Some things are made clear in the metaphor. One is that the branch is helpless to bear fruit of itself. Jesus said, "The branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in

the vine" (v. 4; KJV).

A branch does not produce grapes, but becomes the channel through which fruit is borne. It is the inward strength derived through union with the vine that makes fruit possible. As Jesus put it, "Without me ye can do nothing." The will of God for a human life can never be carried out separated from Jesus Christ. Men deceive themselves when they think they can achieve righteousness on their own. Just as the sap enlivens the vine and produces fruit, so the Spirit results in the fruit that pleases God in a human life.

As recorded in Philippians 1:9, Paul prayed that the love of the brethren would grow ever richer and richer in knowledge and insight of every kind, bringing upon them the gift of true discrimination. By this means they would be able to produce the full fruit of righteousness through Jesus Christ.

One need not be barren and unfruitful. A life of uselessness is a reflection upon God who created us to produce fruit and will make it possible for us to do so if we remain in Him. Jesus once condemned a fig tree, for it had "nothing but leaves." Our excuses are generally attempts to escape from reality and responsibility. We seek to make it appear that everything depends upon ourselves, when it is God who works in us to will and to do His good pleasure if we allow Him to do so.

A farmer taking care of a rock-strewn, hilly acreage in the Missouri Ozarks was reading his Bible one day while his team rested in the shade. For the first time in his life the message got through to him that every Christian had a responsibility to call others to the side of Christ, and that God would work in and with one who boldly testified of his faith. At noon that day he told his wife they must sell out and move. She was startled by this hasty decision. He explained that he had but little formal education and could not do a great deal among local people who knew more than himself. He reasoned that somewhere there

were those more ignorant than he, and he could teach them and earn their gratitude.

Each day he prayed for God to show him where he should go. Two years later he found himself in the far north in an Eskimo fishing village. He purchased a boat, staffed it with natives, and on their first trip led them all to faith in Jesus. In a few brief years the people in two villages had become believers and had been trained to carry on for Christ and tell others the story. The one-time farmer now felt the urge to go to "regions beyond."

He entered the African bush country where missionaries had seldom appeared. He and his wife denied themselves the finer things of life to share with others. Although he could never speak the native tongues, he found willing, if sometimes inept, translators who could get the gist of the message through while the teacher drew diagrams in the dust with a stick. He often went into remote villages and leaned against the wheel of an ox wagon and talked through the entire day as his students squatted about him. His wife ministered to the sick and distressed. As a result, they adopted and reared two native babies whose mothers died in childbirth.

I met the aged couple in London while they were en route to the United States on their first visit back home in more than twenty years. I spent several days with them, and my own faith was deepened by this encounter. These saints of God were quite uneducated and would have been turned down by any examining committee or screening board for missionaries. Yet they had reached thousands of persons for Christ and converted whole villages. The work was being carried on in their absence by the two black children they had reared. These children were so thoroughly trained in the Scriptures that, even though hardly sixteen years of age, they could supervise the effort for Christ.

The aged and wrinkled missionary told me that it seemed

almost by chance that, on the day his life was transformed into a worker for Christ on that Missouri farm, he connected in his mind two passages from God's Word: "Without me ye can do nothing . . . I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (John 15:5; Philippians 4:13; KJV). He never forgot these, and they remained his motto all of his life. He has long since gone to be with the Lord, but his fruit is still being gathered. "I knew that somewhere there were people more ignorant than myself, and if I could find them I could teach them." He found them on two continents and brought forth fruit among them. In spite of my own firm confidence in the Word of God, I always find myself greatly humbled by those who achieve so much regardless of educational handicaps, through simple, trusting faith.

The real productivity of the Spirit is best evidenced in a remarkable statement to the Galatians, in which the apostle contrasts the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit. You will find the record in Galatians 5:1-16. Although several items are listed under each category, the term "works" is plural, while the singular form is used for the fruit of the Spirit. Life in the Spirit does not consist of the exhibition of certain virtues, but of a unified and harmonious existence under God's marvelous grace.

Verse 16 urges the Galatians to "walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." It is essential that "the flesh" here be properly identified, because there is a tendency to think of it only in connection with sexual sins. This is encouraged by the use of the word "lust" in the Authorized Version. Such a limitation is not justifiable in this chapter. Many of the "works of the flesh" have no connection with sensuality or sex. One may walk in the flesh by engaging in "envy, fits of rage, selfish ambitions, and party intrigues," as certainly as if he indulged in fornication and indecency.

"The flesh" is simply "the lower nature," and the word is

so translated in the *New English Version*. The flesh is man pursuing his own stubborn way, rejecting the guidance of the Spirit, and resisting the lordship of Jesus. It is life undisciplined and unrestrained by the power of God, asserting itself without reference to the divine will or purpose. Men who never committed an act of sexual impropriety may be walking in the flesh as certainly as the most flagrant adulterer.

It is not necessary to list all the things that enslave men and make them victims of the material and perishable. Paul does not consider the catalogue complete, seeing that he closes with the words, "and such like." Of one thing he is certain: Those who do such things will never inherit the kingdom of God. The Spirit is the key to the inheritance, and "they that are Christ's have crucified the (lower nature) with the affections and lusts" (Galatians 5:24; KJV).

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, gentleness, and self-control. The heart pulsates with spiritual vitality in its contemplation of these noble attributes. They are the result of a transformed personality, and they could transform the world. No law exists to rebuke these. They can never be had in excess. There can never be too much love, joy, patience, or kindness. One need not limit goodness or faith. The more gentleness and self-control one has the better he will be, and the greater blessing he will be to those about him. The Spirit will produce this fruit in all who are committed to His power and strength. God be praised!

Slavery or Freedom?

Contents

A book, like human life on earth, must come to an end. This is true whether the book (or the life) is good or bad. If the content of this final chapter achieves its purpose, it will make your life better. The message will substitute faith for frustration and hope for hopelessness. It will take you by the hand and lead you in the path God has marked out through the "garden of prayer." And it will give meaning and power to your existence on earth.

This chapter will be devoted to a discussion of things mentioned in one chapter of the New Covenant Scriptures. Romans 8 can be called the chapter of the Holy Spirit. Every chapter in the Bible is such by origin, but this chapter deserves the designation because of content. It is a marvelous presentation of the blessings to be derived from the indwelling Spirit, an oasis for the earth-dweller who must wander through the desert with a desperate need for refreshment. If Martin Luther was correct in regarding Romans as the Alps of the Bible, this chapter is the highest peak, sublime in its towering majesty.

Recently I talked with a young man, a graduate from college, who had returned after a period of service abroad in the armed forces. He had started out to be a Christian while a mere lad, but when he was thrown into rough company away from home he allowed the temptations of the flesh to overcome him. He was unhappy, filled with remorse because he was living

contrary to every principle he had been taught by godly parents. He felt powerless in the grip of sin and loneliness. One night, alone in his quarters, he opened the Bible for want of something to do, and by chance he began reading Romans 8. So powerfully was he impressed that he got up, went outside and walked under the stars, promising God that he would allow the Spirit to take over and command his life from that time on. Reinforced by this indwelling Helper, he returned home stronger than he was when he went away.

There is something tremendous about a chapter that can cleanse and purify lives in this manner. I know that, while I do not comprehend everything involved in this glorious chapter written by Paul, I have grasped enough of it to realize that it holds the divine secret for a power-packed life. I never read it without being elevated in heart. Romans 8 is God's chairlift to take me from the valley to the peak where I can breathe the pure air of Heaven and look down upon the smog.

Here the Spirit of the Lord becomes my friend and companion. Surely one who lives in the same apartment with another should come to know him. The Holy Spirit has moved in to the inner room of my tenement. He has taken down the "empty" sign and become the occupant together with my spirit. Now I am never lonely, for I am never alone. I do not feel forsaken or forlorn! I am happy in the knowledge that the heavenly visitor shares my abode. Let us look at what it really means to entertain this royal guest.

FREEDOM FROM CONDEMNATION

Perhaps no other thought brings a greater sense of despair to man than that of the condemnation hanging over him because of his sin. Life itself becomes a prison cell in which he is a captive awaiting death, and that is the foretaste of everlasting doom. But to be freed from dread, to know that death is

conquered— that is a blessing almost indescribable. Yet, the apostle assures us "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans 8:1; KJV). Out of Christ, condemnation reigns and man is under the sentence of death. In Christ there is no condemnation. Out of Christ men walk according to the flesh. In Christ they walk according to the Spirit.

To "walk after the flesh" means more than simply to cater to passion. It entails this, but it means to live in such a state that Christ is left out of consideration. He is ignored. Decisions are made, and steps are taken without recourse to the demands of God. No authority is recognized except that of one's own wish and pleasure. On the other hand, to walk after the Spirit is to be ever conscious of the will and direction of God, regardless of the cost.

"For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Romans 8:6; KJV); I think I may have talked about that for years before I really understood the profound truth embodied in it. The carnal mind simply discards God. Denial of the existence of God is not necessary. All that is necessary is to act as though God is not there, and to order one's existence with no thought of the divine will. The carnal mind thinks only in terms of the present. It asks immediate gratification and discounts the idea of any future reckoning. Because it looks forward to nothing, it grasps greedily at the now. It dies today for it has no tomorrow.

The Spirit changes all of that. He provides a happy yesterday because of memory without regret, a glorious today in the experience of God's joyful love, and a wonderful anticipation of tomorrow in a state of blessedness. Peace can be disturbed by the thought of past sins, present suffering, or future punishment. The spiritual mind, being free from all of these, has life and peace.

DEATH OF UNRIGHTEOUSNESS

Anyone who has wrestled with some evil tendency knows the agony of his trying to overcome it while the flesh cries out for gratification. Paul described the condition by saying, "To will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not" (7:18; KJV). God made us, loves us, and knows more about our nature than we do. For that reason He has not left us to grapple alone with the problem.

In the first place, Jesus paid the full obligation we owe to the flesh. The debt of sin was canceled by His blood. "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh" (8:12). I do not owe sinful human nature one thing. I am free from every debt it once held against me. No sin can have any rightful claim upon my life. I have been bought with a price and so I no longer belong to myself.

In the second place, God has invested me with His Spirit to put to death the evil deeds that once enticed me. Listen! "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (v. 13). We sometimes use the word mortify in these days to indicate embarrassment. We may use such an expression as, "I was mortified by the language he used in my presence." But that is not the meaning of the word in the Scriptures.

Mortus **means death. A mortal wound results in death. A mortician prepares the bodies of the dead. A mortuary is a place where the corpses may be viewed. To mortify means to kill. Paul is simply saying that the power of the indwelling Spirit of God enables us to put to death the evil passions and corrupt desires.**

In recent years those who had been addicted to drugs have occasionally testified that when they surrendered wholly and completely to Christ and turned their lives over to God, they were able immediately to conquer the dread habit without any

physical withdrawal symptoms. This was seriously questioned by men in the medical profession, and research projects were inaugurated in some cases to determine the accuracy of the reports. In several cases it was found that former addicts were telling the truth about their victory. One research team reported, "Our investigation indicated that those who testified to immediate conquest of the addiction when subjected to a religious experience of deep significance were stating a fact. It was as if some powerful inner force was operative, enabling them to overcome the need to which they had been subjected and of which they been victims."

The Holy Spirit is that "powerful inner force" and dwells in men to help them glorify God in both body and spirit. A man who had grown up in a home where profanity was a way of communication, found himself powerless to overcome the habit, for it had become natural to him. When he turned himself over to Jesus, he prayed for divine help. He said that he felt as though his heart had been scrubbed clean and his tongue had been purged. His manner of speech was transformed. The Spirit had put to death the deeds of the body.

Another man had become a compulsive gambler, and had wrecked his home, forcing away his wife and little son. He was led to believe in Jesus by a former gambling companion who had found an answer for his own life in the Son of God. The man who had neglected his home, his business, and all else to sit at the gambling table, now implored not only divine mercy but divine aid. He was serious about it and from the time he gave himself to Christ Jesus he no longer felt the need to engage in games of chance. On the contrary, he became a living example of the rescued life. He was thrilled when I told him that Christians were known in the world of the early Greeks as "the gamblers" because they were willing to risk everything, including life on earth, to follow Jesus as the Lord of life.

It does not seem advisable to leave this line of thought

without pointing out the statement immediately following the expression, "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." The very next sentence is "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." The word "for" joins the two sentences and demonstrates that we are able to overcome the baser passions and desires. We have a relationship to the Father in which the Spirit becomes the energizing power enabling us to become more like God.

Think of the implications in the phrase "led by the Spirit of God." The original for "led" is *ago*. Two things can be said of its usage in the New Covenant Scriptures. First, it generally applies to persons, and has to do with their motivation to act. Second, it implies willingness and cooperation on the part of those who are led. The leading is not by force. It is not against the will. To be led by the Spirit is to surrender to the influence and guidance of the Spirit. This is a proof of divine sonship. Only sons of God will be led by the Spirit, and thus, when one is so led he has a personal relationship with God. This is quite different from the measuring rods employed by men.

Jesus placed the term "son of God" on a higher plane, morally, than a mere tie of relationship with the Father. There are certain characteristics stated as conditions. For example, only peacemakers can be truly regarded as children of God. This is brought out by Jesus in Matthew 5:9. If one belongs to a religious organization and has a good knowledge of Scripture, yet is guilty of sowing discord among brethren or of refusing to labor for peace, he cannot be called a child of God. True children of God wage peace as actively as others wage war.

Again, Jesus postulates love, even for those who despitefully use you and are enemies, as the criterion of sonship. He says, "Love your enemies, and pray for them which persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:44; KJV). Love for those who are hostile toward God and ourselves is not simply the best policy, or the

way of kindness and pacifism. Love is an essential of the divine-human relationship. This kind of love is a fruit of the Spirit. Not simply an outgrowth of temperament, it is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. The sons of God are those who are led, directed, motivated by, and filled with the Spirit of God. What a triumph over the flesh when one can walk in the Spirit, that is, when every step he takes is in the atmosphere created by the Spirit. Thus, we glorify God.

WITNESS TO SONSHIP

Romans 8:15-17 is one of the most comforting passages in the revelation of God. It is so filled with beauty and majesty that perhaps most persons who read it will go through life without ever probing its depths. Read it and meditate upon it:

> **"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together" (KJV).**

The spiritual implications of a term are difficult to understand if one is not familiar with its natural relationships. In our culture, "the spirit of bondage" may be passed over lightly by a modern reader. We have never experienced the agony of physical slavery and cannot fully appreciate "the spirit of slavery" as applied to sin. On the contrary, we may regard the life of sin as a pleasant time of indulgence that we are called upon to give up or "sacrifice" for Jesus Christ. Thus, the life in Christ is actually regarded as a bondage to which we surrender ourselves, more or less reluctantly, in order to secure a reward.

This was not the case with the citizens of Rome. One writer tells us that the period which witnessed the early growth of

Christianity was one of horror and degradation unequalled in the history of mankind. Of the state of things in Rome at this time, Canon Farrar writes, "At the lowest extreme of the social scale were millions of slaves without family, without religion, without possessions, who had no recognized rights, and towards whom none had any recognized duties, passing normally from a childhood of degradation to a manhood of hardship, and an old age of unpitied neglect."[11]

The French historian Du Pape declares that it can be fairly well authenticated that there were sixty million slaves in the Roman Empire when the gospel was first proclaimed. We are indebted to Cornelius Tacitus, the Roman historian, born the year Paul began his third preaching tour, for the information that the slaves were so numerous they were divided and registered according to their nationalities. And Seneca, the philosopher, the brother of Gallio before whom Paul was brought (Acts 18:12), writes that every slave was under a constant cloud of suspicion as a potential enemy.

To illustrate the enduring fear associated with slavery, I need mention only one incident recorded by Tacitus. The Roman Senate was debating the murder of Pedanius Secundus by one of his slaves. C. Cassius Longinus arose and gravely argued for enforcement of the Silanian law, which made it mandatory to kill all of the slaves owned by a master who was murdered. One after another of the senators came to the rostrum to vote for this sanguinary law. Remembering that such masters often owned hundreds of slaves and that these were in constant jeopardy by the act of one hothead or brutal criminal one can see how cheaply life was regarded by the patricians or ruling classes.

The citizens of Rome could make an immediate application of Paul's statement to the fear of slavery and degradation of sin. The fact is that his letter was written just the year before the meeting of the Senate described by Tacitus. Nothing was glamorous about slavery. Slaves were sustained only by the faint

hope of freedom, or by the certain hope of death.

While we are a long way from the conditions so described, we can still offer a few suggestions about "the spirit of slavery" to sin from which we have been set free by the grace of God.

(1) Slavery to sin destroys human dignity, reducing one to the animal level, making him a victim of passion and inordinate desire. Peter writes, "But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption" (2 Peter 2:12; KJV).

(2) Slavery to sin demands all of our powers and resources, and places every faculty under tribute. Sin reigning in our mortal bodies exacts obedience to the body's desires. It forces us to put all of our parts at its disposal as instruments for wrongdoing (Romans 6:12, 13). Sin is the most cruel taskmaster in the universe.

(3) Slavery to sin reduces us to servitude and then pays off with death. Sin promises everything and provides nothing. "When ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death" (vv. 20, 21; KJV).

(4) Slavery to sin brings only misery and despair. "We know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin . . . O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (7:14, 24).

(5) Slavery to sin forces its captives to breathe the polluted and poisonous atmosphere of fear. All of their lifetime they are subject to bondage through fear of death (Hebrews 2:15), and fear brings the dread of approaching judgment (1 John 4:18).

Over against the frightful state conjured up in the mind at

mention of this "spirit of slavery" is another term, "the spirit of adoption." No more significant expression could be used to indicate a complete transformation in the Roman mind. From slavery to adoption would be like a Horatio Alger book, *From Rags to Riches*. Only if we understand the legal adoptive process can we ever grasp what the apostle is saying. Fortunately, there has been preserved in Roman laws a mass of material related to the adoption process, a very serious business in Rome.

Notice the use of the expression, "very serious business" with reference to Roman adoptive procedures. It was made especially serious because of the law called *patria potestas*. This law gave a father absolute authority over his offspring as long as they lived. It conferred upon the father the right to punish a son regardless of the son's age. He could kill his son and no one could lift a finger against him.

In 450 B.C. a revolt developed among the common people against the patricians. They alleged that the patricians abused the unwritten law and took advantage of them, denying them their civil rights. The magistrates, in order to avoid a revolution, were commissioned to draw up a code, inscribing it upon ten tablets. These were accepted by the popular assembly. Later two more tablets were added to make the great body of laws known as *Lex Duodecim Tabularium*, the "law of the twelve tablets." The laws became the supreme law of the land.

The *patria potestas* stemmed from the second stipulation of the fourth tablet. It provided for the control of a father over his children. His right existed during their whole life to imprison, scourge, keep to rustic labor in chains, to sell or slay, even though they may have been high state officials. A son could not own land in his own name as long as his father lived.

We must try to catch the atmosphere in Rome when Paul wrote to the Romans about slavery and adoptions. In order to do this I shall insert a quotation from Dionysius of Halicarnassus.

His testimony is especially valuable because he was a Greek historian living in Rome at the time Augustus issued his decree for the whole Roman Empire to enroll for taxation purposes. Dionysius wrote *Roman Antiquities*, a twenty-volume history of his adopted city. Nine of these have been preserved in their entirety, and in one of them is this description of the *patria potestas:*

> **The law-giver of the Romans gave virtually full power to the father over his son, whether he thought proper to imprison him, to scourge him, to put him in chains, and keep him at work in the fields or to put him to death; and this even though the son was already engaged in public affairs, though he were numbered among the highest magistrates, and though he were celebrated for his zeal for the commonwealth. Indeed in virtue of this law men of distinction while delivering speeches from the rostra, hostile to the senate and pleasing to the people, and enjoying great popularity on that account, have been dragged down from thence, and carried away by their fathers, to undergo such punishment as these thought fit; and while they were being led away through the forum, none present, neither consul, tribune, nor the very populace which was flattering them, and thought all power inferior to its own, could rescue them.**[12]

Adoption involved the transfer of a person from the absolute control of his whole life by one man to the absolute control of his life by another. There had to be a complete surrender of the power of life and death by one and a complete assumption of that power by another. So drastic was this change that the one who was transferred to another *patria potestas* was looked upon as a wholly new creature. He was said to be born again, or born anew. A whole new existence began for him on the day the transfer of allegiance was ratified. Never again would he be subject in any sense to his former relationship. It was as if he had literally died to his past.

The ceremony of adoption was always public, requiring at least five witnesses. There were two parts to it. The first was called *mancipatio*. From this we get our word emancipate, which means to transfer ownership. It derives from *manus*, hand; and *capero*, to take. In a sale, an article was taken in hand by the new owner. In *mancipatio* the father, the child, and the prospective father took their places with five witnesses upon the dais in the Forum. One of these, called the *librapens*(bearer of the scales) held a pair of balances in one hand and a short brass rod in the other.

The prospective father said, "This day I purchase your son for my own." He then placed a coin in one pan of the balance. The father placed the son's hand in the other pan, but before the sale could be completed he removed the boy's hand, and the other removed his coin. This identical procedure was again enacted. But the third time the father did not remove the hand of the son. The scales were struck with the brass rod as a sign that the sale was completed. The coin was given to the boy as a sign that he would inherit from the new father. It was a seal of his relationship. Even to this day, we say, "The third time is the charm."

There remained one more step called *vindicatio*. In Roman law this meant to affirm and assert one's legal right to a thing. The new father took the adopted son to a magistrate and had his new name properly inscribed in the census tables and the right of *patria potestas*, of life and death, passed into his hands. All of this is most interesting to me, but it is secondary to the purpose of the apostle Paul. His primary desire is to impress upon the Romans the great blessings that accrue to us in Christ. The privileges that were bestowed by adoption in Rome included:

(1) The one adopted was ushered into a whole new family relationship, with a new father and new brothers and sisters, and this was the direct result of the father's choice. He was a chosen one, an elected person. The word "adoption" means to

choose, as our word *option* indicates.

(2) The one adopted was given a new name, clearly indicative of his new relationship.

(3) The adopted one was permitted to eat at the father's table, a privilege never accorded slaves. In the Greek world such eating together was an expression of *koinonia*, fellowship, the sharing of the common life of the father and his family.

(4) He became heir of the estate of the father. If there was an elder brother he became a joint heir with him. He shared in both the hardships and rewards of the family, for this was part of their common life, the fellowship.

(5) When one was adopted by Roman law, his past life was literally blotted out. His former name was removed from the roster of citizenship. All debts were canceled, all obligations deleted. The adopted person began a new life with the slate wiped clean. Even his education began anew. Cicero said the aim of this education was to produce "self-control, combined with dutiful affection to parents and kindliness to kindred."

Paul speaks of the Spirit in connection with the cry "Abba, Father." He says that we did not receive the spirit of slavery to promote fear, but the Spirit of adoption to enable us to utter these lovely words. Two passages contain the expression "Abba Father." According to Romans 8:15 the Spirit enables us to say these words. Galatians 4:6 records that the Spirit thus cries out. In both cases our divine sonship is under consideration. We are adopted, that is, given the place of a son. Adoption is from *huiothesis*, to place as a son. Because we are inducted into the glorious family we are able to cry, "Abba, Father." That is, we are able, through the Spirit, to recognize our real relationship to Christ.

There is more to it than this. The word *abba* could not have been translated "father." It is an Aramaic word, and was the

first expression of a little child in the East. In our country little children say "Da-da" or "Pa-pa" and we must transliterate with "Daddy" and "Papa" to indicate that these are the simple, unaffected, and spontaneous expressions of love in early life. We could not capture this meaning to translate by supplying the word "father."

Paul knew well that the Jews had a strict law forbidding a slave to use the word "abba" in addressing a master or the head of a household. So when he wants to show that we are sons, and not slaves, he makes it clear that the indwelling Spirit identifies us as children of God and makes it possible for us to speak to the Father in a fashion that slaves were not allowed to use. And so close is the union between the Holy Spirit and my own spirit that only the Father can discern which one is calling out to Him.

But the Spirit not only makes it possible for me to cry Abba, but also Father. The first is the cry of emotion and feeling, the tender call of a little child. The second is the form of address of a mature person. W. E. Vine points out that the last word is a wholly different form of address, and that it indicates an intelligent recognition of the relationship sustained with the one so addressed. The word "father" involves confidence and obedience, and when taken with the other word shows a relationship of love and intelligent trust.

But we are told that "the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ" (Romans 8:16, 17; KJV). What does this tremendous statement mean? Remember that Paul is contrasting the state of slavery with the superb experience of sonship. I have described for you the public ceremony of adoption. The sale of a slave, having many of the same aspects, also took place in the presence of witnesses and involved a pair of balances and a deposit of money in one of the pans of the balance.

Suppose the father of an adopted child died, and the natural sons hated the one who was adopted and wanted to debar him from his inheritance. They could claim that he was never adopted at all, but was simply purchased as a slave. The adopted son would have to bring a witness to corroborate his own testimony. If he could find the *librapens*, the scales bearer, that one could say, "I was present, and I know he is a son because I struck the brass ingot and sealed the transaction."

The Holy Spirit exists in us for that very purpose. He is a seal of my redemption. "Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts" (2 Corinthians 12:1, 22; KJV).

The indwelling Spirit is God's guarantee that I am going to inherit every provision of grace. I am not a slave. I am a son. My spirit testifies of this. The Holy Spirit testifies the same. I am even a joint heir with Christ. This establishes the quality of our sonship. Whatever is the lot of Jesus is to be my lot. We are "sharers together" with everything that sonship involves. This is the matter to which the Spirit witnesses.

When Paul affirms that the Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, he assures us that the testimony of our spirit and the Holy Spirit is that we are not sold into slavery. We have been adopted in the majestic family of our Father in Heaven. The promise of Jesus that He would not leave us orphans has come true. Two witnesses within proclaim this fact: the spirit of man and the Spirit of God.

HELP IN WEAKNESS

The difference between one's being in Christ Jesus and being on the outside is hope. It is not that those on the outside do not have hope, for all men do. The difference lies in the varying degree of intensity. Those who know the Lord find their hope

increasing as they grow older. Those who do not know Him find their hope waning, and frequently being supplanted by two malign evils to personality— dread and despair.

Every rational person realizes that he is not going to get out of the human predicament alive. All of his plans for postponing the inevitable are doomed. His string is going to run out. The thread is going to be snipped. The Christian "sustained by an unfaltering trust" is able to "wrap the drapery of his couch about him and lie down to pleasant dreams." Not so the one who sins away his day of grace and suddenly faces the blackness of hopelessness. Without hope we are of all men most miserable.

What is hope? The simplest definition is "a joyous anticipation of the future." Although hope is related to expectation they are not the same. One may expect bad as well as good, storm as well as sunshine. Only when expectation is accompanied by desire is the ingredient of hope included. We desire some things we do not expect, and expect some things we do not desire, but when we have desire and expectation in equal proportion, we possess hope.

Hope is not a retreat for the cowardly or inadequate. Instead, it is a resilient and powerful quality of the soul, lingering on even when the rationalization argues that it is futile. Long after others have given up the search for one who is lost, a mother keeps the light burning in her heart, reacting to every step on the porch, and every knock on the door. We are Abrahams, hoping "when hope seems hopeless" (Romans 4:18).

My faith and my hope are grounded on the same foundation as was Abraham's. Faith and hope are a firm conviction of the validity of every promise of God, because God makes the visible things out of invisible things. The first is the ultimate in power, the second the ultimate in knowledge. God raised Jesus from the dead. So God can raise men from the dead.

And He has promised me I will share in eternal life on a more magnificent scale than I can imagine now.

The fact is that Jesus made sense out of death by making sense out of life. By showing me how to live He taught me how to die. The last gasp of oxygen into my collapsing lungs is of no real consequence. Lifting the latch is not the important matter, but what lies beyond the door. I am convinced that ineffable joy awaits in the other room. Jesus has begotten in me a living hope. "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (1 Peter 5:10, 11; KJV).

Beginning with Romans 8:18, Paul places suffering and splendor in proper perspective. Suffering is for a while; splendor is after a while. The whole created universe, now writhing in agony, is standing on tiptoe, as the original Greek means. It is looking down the long road, waiting for the spectacle of triumph when the sons of God come into their own. The people of God give meaning to the whole creation. Man was at the peak of God's creation. His fall subjected the whole domain to despair. His final victory will bring rejoicing to all. Hope is written in shining letters of gold across the face of the whole created order of things.

"For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?" (Romans 8:24; KJV). This does not mean that hope is an agent or cause of our salvation. We are not saved by hope as an operating principle. The point at issue here is that we have been saved, but there is more to come. In our flesh and blood we are not adapted for existence in a celestial realm. We have not yet shared in all to which our salvation makes us heirs. There is something for which our universe is expectant, joyfully and triumphantly expectant.

When hope becomes reality it ceases to function. The sight of the goal renders hope unnecessary. The endurance test is over. The waiting period is ended. Expectancy gives way to experience; anticipation becomes enjoyment. This is the essence of the Christian life. Tears and trials today; smiles and splendor tomorrow.

After pointing out how patient waiting for something develops within us a real sense of endurance, Paul makes a statement to strengthen the weary heart and invigorate once more those who feel they no longer are getting through to Heaven. Every day of our lives we need to meditate and ponder upon this declaration of divine grace:

> **Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God (Romans 8:26, 27; KJV).**

Hope comes to our aid in counteracting despair and helps us to endure in spite of suffering. But we have another helper, for the Spirit comes to the aid of our weakness. He does so in many departments of life, including prayer.

We are ignorant of many things with regard to prayer. It is far easier to theorize about prayer than it is to practice praying. Often we develop stereotyped words and phrases we repeat monotonously and with little consciousness or real concern. Sometimes we cannot express the real concern. Sometimes we cannot articulate the real burdens or find words in which to couch our deepest longings. All of us have found occasions when we wanted to pray and could not really do so.

For just such emergencies God has given us the indwelling Spirit as an intercessor. We have only one Mediator, one bridge

builder, the man Christ Jesus. But we can have many intercessors. Indeed, we are all to make intercession for one another (1 Timothy 2:1). And we have two divine intercessors, one dwelling in us and the other in Heaven. The Holy Spirit intercedes from within (Romans 8:26), and Jesus intercedes at God's right hand (Romans 8:34).

The Spirit translates our inward inexpressible desires into prayer, taking the intangible and inarticulate groanings of the inner man and putting them in the words of heavenly language. Thus we can be sure that we are on a direct line to the throne room in glory if we are in Christ Jesus.

I have often found relief in prayer, especially when I was in deep need of forgiveness and divine understanding. The greatest consolation comes when I realize that all does not depend upon human vocabulary. The Spirit decodes my impulses and desires and transmits them in rational language. God hears and grace takes over. I do not so much need to learn how to pray, although that is important, as I need to learn how to trust.

God searches and penetrates the recesses of my being. He knows my every thought and intent. He also knows the mind of the Spirit. The communion between God and the Spirit is absolute. It is perfect. There is no faulty connection. The line is never shorted out. The Spirit makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God. He pleads for God's own people in God's own way. If nothing else prompted me to be one of the people of God, this alone would be sufficient motivation. I need to be one of the saints because I desperately need the Spirit as an intercessor.

I hold that Jesus is Lord over life. That means the whole life, all of it. I do not accept the fragmented personality that "saves Sunday out" to serve God. One does not turn the grace of God off and on like the faucet on a kitchen sink. God is interested in everything that I do. He watches me mow the lawn,

trim the shrubs, and roast wieners. I can do all these to His praise and glory. Certainly He wants me to sit down with the saints at the Lord's Table, but He also wants our kitchen table to be His when my wife and I sit down together and join in thanking Him for His blessings.

The Holy Spirit is a constant companion. He does not remain at home when you go to work. He does not stay behind when you go to the stadium to watch a football game. The beautiful thing about God's whole arrangement is that He can order and arrange everything to work out for our ultimate good. Even our foolish mistakes and blunders can be made to fit into a pattern of life. Sorrow and suffering can be woven into life until they actually enhance the design instead of wrecking it.

I do not think it is by sheer chance that Paul includes in this wonderful chapter on the indwelling Spirit that thrilling statement, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28; KJV). Praise His wonderful name! Let us all rejoice in God, through the Spirit who fills us and thrills us and gives us the peace that passes human understanding.

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THE DEATH OF THE CUSTODIAN
The Case of the Missing Tutor

by W. Carl Ketcherside

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THE DEATH OF THE CUSTODIAN

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Preface

Contents

I doubt that a lot of authors really know what made them write their books. That may be a good thing, otherwise some writers would never be able to live with their own consciences. This little book is different. I know why I wrote it, although its content represents a viewpoint in direct contradiction to what I would have expressed a few years ago. Like so many others who believe in Christ, as I grew older and was able to form more mature judgments, I became more aware and discerning of the meaning of grace. It was this new insight which made such an inward change in my life and it clamored for expression.

Even at that, I probably would not have written had it not been that I met A. V. Mansur, a retired dry-land farmer who lives in California. Mr. Mansur and his wife are quiet and reserved, living modestly and simply, away from what the poet calls "the madding throng's ignoble strife." But they are meditative and contemplative. Their early life of toil taught them much about our relationship to, and our dependence upon, the Creator of the universe.

A deepening penetration of the revelation of God encouraged Mr. Mansur to feel that in Christ we are freed from enslavement to law, that God no longer relates to His people upon the basis of their conformity to a written code. This demanded a refocusing of the apostolic letters and re-examination of the very nature of the "new covenant," referred to in Hebrews 8:7-13. Fortunately, it was about this time that I

began stating my growing convictions along the same lines, and my California friend and brother urged me to place them in a more permanent and useful form. This book is the result.

If you are benefited in your reading of this little thesis, you must give any glory and praise to Him "whom having not seen we love." Certainly the writer and the one who encouraged him to write can take little credit. Neither one can lay claim to any profundity or erudition, and both are content to be simply slaves of Jesus.

In 1706, the philosopher, John Locke, wrote, "Reading furnishes the mind only with materials of knowledge; it is thinking makes what we read ours." This book intends only to share building blocks of thought. It is hoped they will prove helpful in your construction of a life worthy of the divine call.

W. Carl Ketcherside

The God of Covenants

Contents

Daniel Webster, who was born in New Hampshire in 1782, became one of the most eloquent orators ever to grace the American scene. His orations helped to launch him upon a career of public service which carried him to the United States Senate, and made him Secretary of State under three presidents.

On one occasion, Mr. Webster was asked to state the most important thought that ever occurred to his mind. His reply was simple and pointed. "The most important thought I ever had," he said, "was that of my individual responsibility to God."

If this was the most important thought to lodge in such a brilliant brain, perhaps all of us should ponder it carefully and honestly. It would be well for us to explore the nature of God's relationship with man as revealed in the Bible. This will help us to understand the mercy of God, and why we are not under law, but under grace.

In the orderly process of creation, when God had formed the material universe, He said, "Come now, let us make man in our own image." It is apparent from subsequent Scriptural disclosures, that this statement was addressed to the Living Word who was with God and was God (John 1:1). Concerning the Word it was said, "All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made" (John 1:3; RSV).

The "image of God" had no reference to man's physical frame. Man bears the image of God because he is a rational, intelligent, and creative personality. It is the spirit, not the clay dwelling of the spirit, which bears the imprint of the divine image. When man was created, God declared that it was not good for man to be alone. By his very nature man is a social being. His personality develops best by association with others of his own kind. So God made a helpmeet worthy of man and presented her to him as a companion.

At the same time the family relationship was instituted by a divine decree. God said, "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh" (Matthew 19:5; KJV). As a place for the pair to dwell a garden was created eastward in Eden, and man was assigned the task of overseeing it and keeping it trim and neat. It was here that God placed the first limitation upon the primeval pair. He granted them permission to eat of the fruit of every tree in the garden except one. The tree of knowledge of good and evil was off limits. God said, "You shall not eat of it, for the day you eat of it you will die."

The rest of the story is well known. Satan, adopting the form of the serpent, enticed the woman by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. She ate of the forbidden fruit and gave it to her husband, who also ate of it. Sin thus entered the world. The effect was seen immediately. The man and woman, enveloped in a sense of shame, sought to hide from the presence of God. Several thousand years later Paul summed up the consequences by saying, "Sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned" (Romans 5:12; RSV).

In order to preclude the possibility that man would eat of the tree of life and live forever in a state of alienation and disgrace, God ejected Adam and Eve from the paradise in which He had placed them. But even at the beginning there was a ray

of hope penetrating the darkness of despair. In pronouncing a sentence of degradation upon the serpent, God said, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (KJV). The head of the serpent is the seat of his power. The venom in his fangs produces death. The time would come when the seed of the woman, although bruised by the serpent, would destroy or crush the one who had power over death.

The world of mankind had to pass through stages of development similar to those of the individuals who composed it. The world had its infancy, childhood, and adolescence, before it attained maturity. Just as parents must accommodate their instruction, training, and discipline to the state of their children at a given time, so God likewise had to adjust His requirements to the condition of humanity in progressive phases.

A realization of this fact leads to certain inevitable conclusions. Things that might be condoned in one age could not be continued in another. We smile at the antics of a little child, but realize that the same actions on the part of an older person would be an occasion for regret and reproof. The principle of human responsibility is stated by the apostle Paul to the Athenian philosophers in the statement, "The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30; RSV).

God has never required of man in any age what he is unable to perform. He has always adjusted His mandates to meet the needs and abilities of man in the circumstances in which he is found. A good illustration of this is found in what may be termed "the evolution of the demonstration of worship." Certainly the God who is "over all, through all, and in all," has the right, and even the obligation, of revealing what is acceptable as worship of His majesty at any time.

When man lived in a nomadic culture, he was required to

offer sacrifices upon an altar consisting of an earthen mound. When certain geographical spots became hallowed because of significant events, a more permanent altar of field stones was permitted. However, to avoid any temptation to idolatry, all engraving or carving upon the face of the stones was forbidden (Exodus 20:24, 25). Later, when God separated a people from bondage to form a nation, He provided for them a tent, or tabernacle, suitable to their wandering life for forty years in the wilderness.

When this same people settled in a land that was to become their own, God selected a city where He inscribed His name. Here they were permitted to erect a house, the magnificence of which was unsurpassed in its day. In spite of its lavish beauty and splendor, it was to provide only a temporary place for adoration of God. At the dedication service, the king who supervised and financed its erection acknowledged that it could never qualify as a dwelling for God (2 Chronicles 6:18).

When Jesus came into the world to share the human lot, He made it clear that the worship of God was not to be limited by time or place. "'Neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth'" (John 4:21, 24; RSV). God now has no holy places, holy days, or holy things. All of these belong to a childhood age that we should have outgrown. God now has only a holy people. The only sanctuary is a consecrated human heart. The only temple is the one composed of living stones. Those who dedicate piles of brick and stone, and speak in awed tones of "the sanctuary" are spiritually infantile. They have not "put away childish things."

There is but one more step awaiting. There remains a new Jerusalem to be revealed. John, who was given a preview of the city, wrote, "I saw no temple therein" (Revelation 21:22; KJV). No other observation more fully conveys the difference between life on our material planet and that in the eternal state. There is

not a city upon earth that does not contain edifices devoted to worship. In the city of the Ultimate there will be no place of worship. There the temple at last becomes divinely personal: "For the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it."

Responsibility is always gauged by man's ability to respond. God has revealed His will progressively, as man was able to grasp it and fulfill it. Human responsibility was thus judged upon the basis of man's place in history at the time. Yet there is one fact about the divine-human relationship which is always the same. This fact is that God has chosen to relate to man on the basis of covenants. He is a covenant-making God. No one who ignores this fact will ever fully grasp God's plan and purpose in any age.

God's covenants with man are always acts of divine grace. They stem from the fact that God is love, and it is the nature of this love to be ever active and outgoing toward its object. There is no obligation owed to sinful man to compel the Creator to continue to act toward him in such a manner as to promote his welfare. The covenants of God grow out of the nature of God, and not out of the nature of man.

A simple covenant is an agreement between two parties. In a human covenant the party of the first part and the party of the second part are equals before the law. This cannot be the case in a divine-human covenant, however. God always must be regarded as supreme. He is sovereign in the universe. He proposes and man accepts. Man is in no position to bargain with God or to sue for better terms.

While God proposes terms of His covenants, He never imposes them. Man is free to refuse the proffered relationship when it is conditional. In most instances a sign or seal of the covenant is provided. Such a visible token serves as a constant reminder of the relationship. Like a wedding ring, it is a symbol

of a covenant in force, to both those who were parties to the covenant and those who were not.

As a working basis for continued study, let us summarize with the statement of two facts that are apparent to every person who is informed in the revelation of God. These will be foundational for all else that is deduced from the sacred Scriptures.

1. ***Covenant Relationship*****. God has chosen to relate to mankind on the basis of covenants. All of God's covenants with man have been designed to achieve the good of humanity. God has revealed himself as a covenant-making God. He has entered into agreements based upon His perfect character. He has placed himself on record by making immutable promises. The fact that one covenant supersedes another is not attributable to fickleness or caprice, but to the changing condition of the world of mankind. Our relationship to God must be a covenantal one. We must enter such an agreement freely as the party of the second part. It is a profound truth that the infinite Creator respects the sovereignty of the human will, to the extent that the created may reject the Creator. Finite man may refuse the hand that made him, but he cannot refuse the consequences that follow.**

2. ***Rules or Ordinances*****. God has arranged that all of the blessings and privileges He confers upon men shall be enjoyed in conjunction with ordinances of His own appointment. This is true in both the natural and spiritual realms. Thus we read of the ordinances of the sun, moon, and stars in Jeremiah 31:35, 36. The same word is employed here for "ordinances" as is used for expressions of worship. One might as well try to secure light in the material realm without the sun and moon as to seek for light in the spiritual domain without God's revelation.**

The primitive root from which "ordinance" is derived, literally means "to hack." It referred first to the action of cutting messages and directions in the bark of trees. Then it came to

refer to the action of carving in stone slabs or pillars by use of a chisel and hammer. It is significant that the words of the Ten Commandments were written in stone tablets by the finger of God, the Holy Spirit. The word finally progressed until it meant "to engrave." Laws and enactments were originally chiseled in stone, and later scratched or engraved in metal plates. Thus, the term eventually came to mean an enactment or appointment, generally by proper authority. God's blessings are in response to God's ordinances.

With this introductory and background material we can examine the initial covenant God introduced and preserved in the Scriptural record. It will be confusing to refer to God's commandment with Noah as "the first covenant." That term was appropriated by a divine writer and applied to a later covenant enacted to create a special nation out of former slaves. That nation was designed to keep alive on earth the concept of monotheism, that is, belief in one God (Cp. Hebrews 8:7, 11). The initial covenant was made with Noah. It was the first in point of time, but not the first in terms of importance to the purpose of God. A study of it, however, will lay the groundwork for investigation of other covenants of God.

The Covenant with Noah

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The word "antediluvian" has been given to the age before the flood. It simply means "preceding the deluge." It was an age saturated with gross iniquity. There were two strains of humanity then in existence. The descendants of Seth called themselves by the name of the Lord. They were "sons of God." The descendants of Cain were loose and dissolute men. The two families mingled in marriage. Their offspring became violent, and as a result, wickedness was great in the earth. Every imagination of the thoughts of human hearts was evil continually, and the Lord was sorry He had made man. It grieved Him in His heart. He declared, "'I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the ground, man and beast and creeping things and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them'" (Genesis 6:7; RSV).

There was one exception, a man by the name of Noah. He is introduced with two remarkable statements. The first reads, "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord" (v. 8). The second says, "Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God" (vv. 8, 9). This is the first time the word "grace" is used in the Bible, and Noah was the first man to be called "just."

The original Hebrew word for "grace" is one that suggests an active personal principle manifesting itself, not in a mere attitude, but in deed. It is not an abstract quality but a vital demonstration. It may be properly defined as a free bestowal of

kindness upon another who does not deserve the blessing, and has no means of adequately paying for it. God looked upon Noah with favor, which manifested itself in the provision for his escape from the determined destruction.

The word "just" is akin to the word for "righteousness," and this is a word of relationship. Noah had kept himself free from the contamination of the social culture. He walked with God instead of with the world. A direct descendant of Seth, he had kept his association pure. He was "blameless in his generation" (RSV). God disclosed to Noah His determination to make an end of all flesh because violence reigned in the earth. Probation was to be extended for 120 years, during which time Noah was to construct an ark.

The means chosen to purge the earth was a cleansing bath of water. Since every nation of antiquity has its tradition of the flood, this may account for the almost universal ritual employment of water as a symbol for purification. After more than a year in the ark, Noah and his family stepped forth into a new world. Noah's first act was to construct an altar. In the role of patriarchal priest he offered sacrifices of every clean beast and bird. The sacrificial odor pleased the Lord, who vowed never again to destroy every living creature as He had done. The lifetime of the earth would be an undisturbed continuity.

Noah and his sons now constituted God's sole representatives for the population of the new world. Accordingly, they were given the identical responsibility conferred originally upon Adam. "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth" (Genesis 1:28; 9:1; KJV).

The first recorded covenant that God made with the world of His creation, was a covenant including every creature in whose nostrils was the breath of life. God informed Noah and his sons that He would establish His covenant with them and their descendants, and with the birds, cattle, and every beast of the

earth, that had come out of the ark. The fact that God included all these in a covenant should give us deep concern about endangered species.

The terms of the covenant were plainly announced: "'I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth'" (Genesis 9:11; RSV). The duration of the covenant was fixed for "all future generations." Thus it was designated "an everlasting covenant" (Genesis 9:16).

The Hebrew word for "everlasting" is *olam*. It is one of several terms signifying duration. In its origin it signified veiling or concealing from sight. Gradually it came to mean that which extended beyond one's vision, and finally developed the connotation of "age-lasting." To determine the extent of the duration one must study the limitations that appear in the context. In this instance they are clearly given. The covenant is to stand while the earth remains, or while the descendants of Noah in all future generations remain upon the earth.

A visible sign of the covenant was given, which would be observable for its duration. God said, "I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth" (Genesis 9:13). God nowhere says that the bow is to bring to man's remembrance that a flood will never again destroy the earth. Instead, God said, "'When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant'" (Genesis 9:14, 15; RSV). Thus the bow is not so much a reminder to us of the agreement as it is a sign of God's covenant faithfulness. As such a symbol we may expect it to recur in any circumstances where the divine fidelity is to be displayed. For this reason, the rainbow is used in conjunction with the throne of God (Cp. Revelation 4:3).

Inasmuch as this is the initial or first covenant God made with man, we should study it carefully for any indication of the

manner of God's dealings on a covenant basis. We can readily see that He arranged no preceding consultation with man as to the content or terms of the covenant. The proposal was not, therefore, an outgrowth of reasoning between the divine and human minds. The covenant was an arrangement conceived by God alone, in His infinite and infallible mind. It was revealed or disclosed to man. This is important, since we tend to think of a covenant as growing out of mutual arbitration.

History is a record of the footprints of God in the life of humanity. The two most outstanding events of divine interposition in the affairs of the world were the flood and the incarnation. Of such transcendent significance was the first that it stands as a constant rebuke to those skeptics who deny the possibility of a termination of the present world order, based upon a false assumption of continuity in the natural realm since creation (2 Peter 3:3, 4). The second made such an impact that it changed the calendar. It was as if time stood still, then resumed with a new meaning.

In the flood God demonstrated His wrath; in the coming of Jesus He manifested His love. "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness" (Romans 11:22; KJV). The first event was a visitation of destruction; the second, of salvation. The one was to terminate life; the other that it might be granted more abundantly.

Both covenants were given through a comforter. The first was given through Noah, whose name means "comforter" (Genesis 5:29). The second was given through the Holy Spirit as a Comforter from the Father. Because of the original covenant we need never fear the destruction of all flesh by water; because of the last we need never fear the second death. The covenant with Noah resulted in a rainbow spanning the clouds of the heavens; the covenant of grace has its rainbow round about the throne of Him who will come in the clouds of Heaven. The God

of the universe is revealed as a covenant-making God.

Our relationship with God must be on the basis of a covenant. As finite creatures seeking to please Him, we must investigate and become aware of the implications growing out of this fact.

The Covenant with Abraham

Contents

When Noah and his sons came out of the ark they faced a new world. A fresh start had to be made. Accordingly, they were given a repetition of the primal commission. "And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth'" (Genesis 9:1; RSV). The oldest ethnographic chart known to man is found in Genesis 10. It details the nations that came from Shem, Ham, and Japheth. It closes with the observation, "These are the families of the sons of Noah, according to their genealogies, in their nations; and from these the nations spread abroad on the earth after the flood" (Genesis 10:32; RSV).

In the next chapter, although certainly not in chronological order, is inserted a rather detailed account of how the dispersion was accomplished. At the time "the whole earth had one language and few words," (Genesis 1:11; RSV). Apparently, under the influence of Nimrod, a descendant of Ham, the people decided to resist being scattered. They resolved to construct a city and erect a high tower as a visible rallying point. In order to do this they fired bricks which they cemented together with bitumen, or asphalt. The place chosen was the plain of Shinar.

The power exerted in working together and in speaking the same things was attested to by God, who declared, "'Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do; and nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them'" (v. 6; RSV). To

overthrow the conspiracy calculated to avoid populating the earth, God said, "'Come, let us go down, and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech'" (v. 7; RSV). The record adds, "So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city." The "so" shows how it was done. It means "in this manner," or "by this method."

It is well to note that the descendants of Arpachshad and Eber, of the family of Shem, settled in that area along the Euphrates River which came to be designated "the land of the Chaldeans." It was not long until the tribes of mankind, seeking an outlet for the worshiping instinct, degenerated into idolatry, paying homage to both natural and artificial gods. The idea of one God, Maker of Heaven and earth, was fast disappearing beneath the weight of superstition and tradition. It became obvious that, if the concept of monotheism was to survive, it would have to be made the sacred trust of a particular nation, around which such safeguards could be constructed as to segregate it from the rest of humanity, with its contaminating influence.

Thus, when every nation on earth had chosen gods for itself, the God of Heaven chose for himself a nation on earth. To sire this select people, He chose an Arpachshadean from the city of Ur, whose name was Abram. ***Ab*** **is the Hebrew for "father," and** ***ram*** **is the word for "high" or "chief." The very name signifies that its bearer was a man of destiny, one who was to be an outstanding progenitor.**

Abram was the son of Terah, an idol worshiper, whose father, Nahor, had also served other gods (Joshua 24:2). Abram was instructed to leave his country, kindred, and father's house. While he obeyed with alacrity the command to go, he did not at first fully comply with the conditions. He and Sarai, his wife, accompanied his father and nephew, "and they went forth together from Ur of the Chaldeans to go into the land of

Canaan; but when they came to Haran, they settled there" (Genesis 11:31; RSV). This delayed Abram until after the decease of his father. Then "Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions which they had gathered, and the persons that they had gotten in Haran; and they set forth to go into the land of Canaan" (12:5; RSV).

They entered Canaan, later called Palestine, or "land of the Philistines" from the north. Since they were a band of nomads, they wandered southward as their animals found grazing to sustain them. Abram built an altar to the Lord, to mark every principal stop. Driven into Egypt by a serious famine, they sojourned there until sustenance was again found in Canaan. "So Abram went up from Egypt, he and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the Negeb" (13:1; RSV).

A quarrel among the herdsmen was settled by an agreement between Abram and Lot to go their several ways. Lot chose the verdant plains of Jordan and removed to Sodom. This divested Abram of the last of his relatives. He was now separated from his kindred. It is appropriate that we note the words of the Lord immediately forthcoming. "The Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever" (13:14, 15; KJV).

Why did the Lord select this one individual from the multitude of men upon the earth, to be the progenitor of His mighty nation? Every nation began with one man whose offspring became a clan, then a tribe, and eventually a nation. What was the outstanding characteristic of Abram that made him the subject of God's choice? Concerning this choice it is affirmed that God "calleth those things which be not as though they were' (Romans 4:17; KJV). James declared, "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world" (Acts

15:18; KJV). It appears that Abram, of all men on earth in his day, possessed that one quality which commended him to the Lord as the progenitor of a covenant people, whose relationship would be established upon the basis of faith.

In order to bring mankind up to that state of maturity where a covenant based upon faith could be operative and effective, it became necessary to make another covenant with Abram that could provide the background and setting for the last and greatest agreement to be made with man. Thus there were two covenants embraced in the promises to Abram. One was fleshly and temporal, and its token was a sign in the flesh. Its promises were carnal. The other was spiritual and lasting. Its promises were of a better and a more enduring nature. One of these covenants was not a continuation of the other, although the first provided a frame of reference for the second. They were addressed to different persons for different purposes. Unless this is kept in mind, one will become involved in serious error.

A COVENANT AFTER THE FLESH

In his beautiful allegory to the vacillating Galatians, the apostle Paul says, "For these are the two covenants" (4:24; KJV). He distinguishes the subjects of the two by the expressions "born after the flesh" and "by the promise." It is true that he was dealing with the covenants made at literal Mount Sinai and figurative Mount Sion, but the covenant at Sinai was a national one conferred upon the physical seed of Abram. It was merely a ratification on a national basis of the original one given at a time when Abram had not one child. Before the Lord could make a "kingdom of priests," and a "holy nation" (Exodus 19:6; KJV), he had first to provide seed for the primal covenantee. This was a remarkable arrangement in itself, considering that Abram was "about an hundred years old," and reproductively his body and Sarai's womb were dead (Romans 4:19).

When God called Abram, He assured him, "I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 12:2, 3; KJV). Here, at the very beginning, we have the germ of both covenants, and it will be noted that both are to be realized through the seed of Abraham. National greatness and universal blessing— these are the attainments to be achieved.

To those who are of the opinion that these words were spoken to Abram while he sojourned in Haran, we merely remark that Stephen said, "The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran" (Acts 7:2; KJV). The same speaker also says relative to Canaan, "He promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child" (v. 5; KJV). This last fact presented a concern to both Abram and Sarai, although their reactions were different.

Sarai devised an expedient, suggesting that Abram have sexual congress with Hagar, her Egyptian maidservant, saying, "It may be that I may obtain children by her" (Genesis 16:2; KJV). Hagar bore a son, who was named Ishmael, and he became the illustrious head of twelve tribes, now represented by the Arabs. Later, when Sarai's own son was born, enmity existed between the two. That hostility between their seed still makes the headlines of our metropolitan newspapers regularly.

Abram had concluded that his trusted homeborn servant, Eliezer of Damascus, would be adopted and become his heir, in lieu of natural seed, and he so informed the Lord (Genesis 15:2, 3). But the Lord assured him such was not in the divine plan. His heir would be an offspring of Sarai and himself. Then occurred a demonstration that was remarkable and must have made a lifelong impression upon the patriarch.

Abram was taken outside his tent before dawn and directed to look toward Heaven. He was told that this progeny would be as innumerable as the stars shimmering in the still darkened sky. It was at this juncture the record declares, "And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness" (15:6; KJV). To this important statement we will have to make frequent allusion. This is the first time the word "believe" occurs in the sacred record. Abraham was indeed "the father of the faithful."

The Lord said to Abram, "I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it" (v. 7). When Abram asked by what means he could be certain of the inheritance, the Lord told him to provide a heifer, a female goat, and a ram, each three years old, also a turtledove and a young pigeon. It will be recognized that these constitute the representative categories of sacrificial birds and animals.

Abram killed all of these and split the animals in two, laying each half over against the other, leaving a passageway between. In Jeremiah 34:18 we are informed that this was a solemn way of ratifying a covenant. The parties to the covenant killed an animal, dividing the carcass lengthwise. They placed the pieces opposite each other and walked between them to meet in the middle, where they took the ritual oath. In effect, the oath was a plea for the one who broke the covenant to suffer the same fate as the slain animal.

Abram kept birds of prey off the slain beasts all day. At sunset he fell into a supernatural trance. He heard the voice of God speaking and saw a smoking furnace and burning lamp pass between the pieces of animals, symbolizing that God was entering into a covenant. The record says, "In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land" (Genesis 15:18; KJV). A description of the boundaries and the names of the nations inhabiting the territory was then provided. This closed a memorable day. It began

before dawn and lasted until after dark. Abram had learned that his heir would be personally begotten, and that his seed would be granted the whole land of Canaan. All history after this was affected by this covenant.

THE DIVINE PURPOSE

It would be well for us to study God's purpose in the covenant, as it is related to the land inheritance of the fleshly seed of Abram. The divine intent was to constitute a nation for the preservation of the great truth of the existence of one God. That is why the nation began with one who believed in God with such intensity of purpose that his very faith could be "counted unto him for righteousness" in the sight of God.

But the faith of an ancestor was not enough. It was essential to establish the nation that came from his loins in a territory of their own, to segregate them by law, custom, practice, and geography from other nations that were steeped in polytheism. It is difficult, if not impossible, to build a strong central power out of nomadic herdsmen, whose tendency is to be ever on the move and who prefer dwelling in the desert to living in the city.

Accordingly, God ordained for these people to become slaves in the most enlightened nation of that day. Here the wanderlust was burned out of them. They were taught by compulsion to make bricks. They learned the discipline of daily toil. They were forced to construct great cities such as Pithom and Raamses. So effective was the attempt to make them a settled people that when they were finally led forth into the wilderness, they longingly sought to return to the land of slavery.

Since every nation in that day was idolatrous, during the period of serfdom the descendants of Abraham were exposed to idolatrous practices. These were made abhorrent by virtue of an

edict of the Pharaoh that all of their male children should be sacrificed to the maw of the chief god, the Nile River. Moreover, when the time of deliverance came, great catastrophes fell upon both the heathen inhabitants and their gods of lower animal life. The superiority of the God of Israel was clearly demonstrated. God promised, "'I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord'" (Exodus 12:12; RSV). Deliverance began with fearful judgment from the Lord upon the helpless gods of mighty Egypt. This night, which was memorialized for all future generations by a feast, served as a constant rebuke against idolatry.

The land of Canaan was peculiarly adapted to the divine purpose. It was selected from the lands of the earth, as Abram had been from the inhabitants of the earth, and as Israel was from the nations. As the seed of Abram became the people of God, so Palestine became the land of the Lord (Psalm 85:1; Isaiah 8:8). The land could not even be sold on a permanent basis. It did not belong to man to convey. As Israel became a holy people, so this territory became "the holy land" (Zechariah 2:12).

This territory was situated in a strategic position to accomplish the will of God. It was bounded on the north by the towering Lebanon Range, on the east by the Jordan River, on the south by the Wilderness of Sin, and on the west by the Mediterranean Sea. Even more remotely sealed in by the Arabian Desert, it provided for the compact dwelling of a people around the center of their worship. Yet it was also on the main trade routes, along which flowed the commerce of the ancient world.

The purpose of God with regard to the seed of Abraham was to keep intact the notion of one God. The ultimate design was to bring all nations to an acknowledgment of this truth

through the coming of the Son of God, and also through Him to extend salvation unto all the earth. Israel was to be the nation of the Messiah in that it preserved the ideal of one God and thus prepared the world for the advent of Him who was "the only begotten Son of God."

Having taken this brief glance into the future of Abraham's seed in order to understand the purpose of God, let us now return to the actual covenant as God made it with Abram. The party of the first part in the covenant was God himself. The party of the second part was Abram and the coming seed, still not begotten when the covenant was made.

In Genesis 17 is recorded the validation of the physical covenant. Abram was now ninety-nine years old. Almost twenty-five years had elapsed since he forsook the land of the Chaldeans. Previously the Lord had appeared under the title of Jehovah. He now introduces himself as El Shaddai, God Almighty. This was assurance that whatever He promised He had the power to perform. In view of the majesty of His name, He began by instructing Abram, "Walk before me, and be thou blameless." The Lord said, "As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations" (Genesis 17:4; KJV). This was the fifth time God promised to make Abram the father of an innumerable progeny.

Frequently in history God memorialized an event of great significance by bestowing a new name, or by altering a previously existing one. In this instance the name of Abram was changed to Abraham. It was pointed out that "Abram" is formed by combining *ab*, father; and *ram*, chief. To this was now added *hamon*, meaning "multitude." The abbreviated form of Abramhamon, or Abraham, means "chief father of a multitude." The change in the form of address was accompanied by the words, "I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee"

(17:7, 8; KJV). It was for this reason that Simon Peter referred to God as "the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers" (Acts 3:13; KJV).

Further, God promised to give to Abraham and to his seed after him the land in which he was a foreigner, or all the land of Canaan. He declared it would be an everlasting possession of his seed and further declared, "I will be their God." All covenants that God makes with man are based upon what He has done for man. It was thus enjoined upon Abraham and his posterity to keep the covenant inviolable.

"This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; every man child among you shall be circumcised" (Genesis 17:10; KJV). The seed by which the ova is fertilized, thus causing conception, is manufactured within the body of the male. It is deposited in the body of the female through the external organ of procreation. Thus, this organ was regarded as the very instrument of life, the channel of the physical seed. It was provided that the foreskin of this organ would be clipped or cut off. This left a permanent indication of covenant relationship that was directly connected with the begetting of offspring, who were in turn to be brought into covenant relationship. The operation was to be performed when the male child was eight days old.

A SACRED COVENANT

The Lord declared, "My covenant shall be *in your flesh* for an everlasting covenant" (v. 13). So sacred did the mark of circumcision become that when one took a solemn oath affecting future seed, he was required to place his hand on the procreative organ. This is exactly as one today may place his hand on a copy of the Holy Bible when taking a judicial or executive oath. Thus when Abraham was preparing to dispatch his faithful servant to secure a wife for Isaac, he said, "Put, I pray thee, thy hand

under my thigh: and I will make thee swear by the Lord, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell, but thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac" (Genesis 24:2-4; KJV).

It was furthermore declared, "And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant" (17:14). It is evident that the blessings of the covenant applied to the individual, only when he had obeyed the ordinance of circumcision. The ordinance was not the covenant, but it was essential to bring one into the privileges and prerogatives of the covenant.

It was not enough simply to be born into the physical family of Abraham. If one so born was not circumcised, either through neglect or irreverence, he was cut off because he had broken the covenant.

Isaac was circumcised when he was eight days old, as God had commanded Abraham (21:4). In turn, he circumcised his own sons. Jacob, who was the father of twelve sons, did likewise with his offspring. As a result of this mark in the flesh, the nomadic tribes that descended from Abraham felt a kinship with God which was not felt by the Canaanites around them.

The writer to the Hebrews puts it in the framework of faith: "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (11:8-10; KJV).

How strange it is that these wanderers who lived in tents in the wilderness had a dream of inhabiting a city constructed by divine power. With a mark in their flesh serving as a constant reminder of the covenant, they regarded themselves as heirs of a promise spoken from Heaven. It is said of them, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (Hebrews 11:13; KJV).

Perhaps those who are the seed of Abraham, whether in flesh or faith, are doomed to be always strangers and pilgrims on the earth, always looking for a city that has foundations. Perhaps there are always promises that must be seen afar off, of which we must be persuaded, and which we must embrace. But God had to create a nation on earth through which His Son could come, that the kingdom of Heaven might be received through His coming.

The First Testament

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When God called Abram, it was His original intent to make of his seed a great nation. To accomplish His purpose He allowed the descendants of Abram to be cradled and conditioned in the most advanced culture of that day. Because of its fortunate situation on either side of the River Nile, Egypt had become "the breadbasket of the world." In order to transport the circumcised desert-wanderers into Egypt, divine providence employed famine, human jealousy and hostility, lies, and perfidy. It was a supreme demonstration that God can take even the vagaries and errors of humankind and direct them to the fulfillment of His ultimate design.

In Egypt the descendants of Jacob were first accorded royal treatment, but later reduced to the status of slaves. In spite of dire bondage with its hardships, the people thrived under protection from on high. The seventy souls who went down into that country with Jacob multiplied in number until they probably exceeded two million. When the proper time came, they were freed from bondage and started on the way to the land that was to be peculiarly theirs, according to promise. Without realizing it, the ruling Pharaoh had been an instrument in training the slaves to develop the very qualities essential to their attainment of nationhood. The family of the Messiah was ready to become the nation of the Messiah.

God reveals himself in a manner adapted to the state of things existing when the revelation is given. Since the cardinal

purpose was to make a nation to keep alive in the minds of men the existence of one true God, it was necessary to impress upon all nations the significance of His selection of Israel as a nation separate from all others. At that time when "every nation made gods of their own" (Cp. 2 Kings 17:29), the feeling was universal that the power of a god could be determined by two factors. One was the state of the people over whose fate he was alleged to preside, and the other was the works of wonder performed in their behalf. If a nation prospered materially, was strong in battle, and triumphed over others, it was conceded that the god of such a nation was a powerful deity.

To gain a proper degree of respect and reverence for himself and the chosen people, God accepted this criterion and proceeded to demonstrate His superiority. Since His people were slaves in Egypt, the first manifestation of power was against that nation and its gods. He selected as an ambassador one who had been reared and educated in the king's palace, but who had become a political exile under charge of homicide. God sent him to the royal court with a positive ultimatum to the Pharaoh to let His people go. When the haughty monarch denied any knowledge of the God of Israel, it became necessary for God to show His divinity. To be effective to mankind, any proof divine power must be supernatural and capable of being fully perceived.

Ten different demonstrations were manifested in Egypt. The first three were simply to prove that Jehovah was the Lord. "And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I stretch forth my hand upon Egypt" (Exodus 7:5; KJV). The next three were to demonstrate that He was also God in Egypt and that the deities of the land were impotent before Him. To this end He drew a line of demarcation between Goshen, the province where Israel dwelt, and the rest of Egypt. "I will sever in that day the land of Goshen, in which my people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there; to the end thou mayest know that I am the Lord in the midst of the earth. And I will put a

division between my people and thy people: to morrow shall this sign be" (Exodus 8:22, 23; KJV). Goshen was unaffected by the succeeding disasters that paralyzed the remainder of the country.

The third series of three catastrophic events advanced one more step. They proved that there was none like Him in all the earth. "'This time I will send all my plagues upon your heart, and upon your servants and your people, that you may know there is none like me in all the earth. For by now I could have put forth my hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, and you would have been cut off from the earth; but for this purpose have I let you live, to show you my power, so that my name may be declared throughout all the earth.'" (Exodus 9:14-16; RSV).

At the very birth of the nation, the final blow to Egypt was destined to prove that this God was a master of all gods. He proposed to deliver these bondslaves without revolt, clash of arms, or loss of a single life among them. At this time Egypt was the mightiest nation on earth. The Pharaoh was feared above every other earthly monarch. On the night appointed for Israel's deliverance, the slaves demanded of their masters jewelry of silver and gold. God moved upon the hearts of the Egyptians to grant this request. Another factor entering into the transaction was the reputation that Moses had gained in the eyes of the Egyptians, by reason of the mighty works done through him (Exodus 11:3).

At midnight the death angel passed through the land with terrible execution. He smote all of the firstborn, "from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle" (Exodus 12:29; KJV). Yet, "against any of the people of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue" (11:7). There was a great cry of anguish in Egypt, for there was not a house in which there was not one dead. The agonized Pharaoh did not wait until

morning. He summoned Moses and Aaron by night and said, "Rise up, and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, serve the Lord, as ye have said. Also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone; and bless me also" (12:31, 32).

When the full realization of what he had done dawned upon the Pharaoh, he changed his mind, and decided to pursue the Israelites and return them to slavery. The Israelites trembled when they saw the approaching Egyptians, but Moses said, "'Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will work for you today; for the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be still'" (Exodus 14:13, 14; RSV). Lifting his rod over the waters of the Red Sea, he caused them to part by the power of God. The people of Israel marched through the sea on dry ground, and the Egyptian cavalry, attempting to follow, were all drowned.

So mighty was this feat that many years later Moses asked, "'Has any god ever attempted to go and take a nation for himself from the midst of another nation, by trials, by signs, by wonders, and by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? To you it was shown, that you might know that the Lord is God; there is no other besides him'" (Deuteronomy 4:34, 35; RSV). The expression, "take a nation for himself," is a key phrase in any study of the relationship of God to Israel. In fulfilling His design God showed His superiority to the gods of the most prosperous and flourishing nation of the day.

THE NATIONAL CONSTITUTION

It is one thing to lead a group of slaves from the land of bondage, and a wholly different matter to weld them into a

nation. To accomplish the latter, the first thing required is some system of laws or a constitution, by which the people shall be governed. In a theocracy such a constitution would have to be in the nature of an announced covenant. Accordingly, after God had freed the people of Israel, He did not allow them to take the direct route to Canaan, which would have led them by the way of the Philistine garrisons. Instead, God turned them southward toward Mount Sinai, and around the base of this peak they established their camp. Here God made known His intention to submit to the people en *masse* the question of whether or not they would be willing to enter into the covenant relationship with Him, accepting such responsibility as would be entailed. Thus, the Creator preserved the dignity and respected the will of creatures made in His own image, although He was under no obligation to deal with them on this exalted level.

Moses, the mediator, was summoned to come up into the mountain, and he ascended in the presence of all the people. The proposal of God was committed to Moses to convey to the entire multitude. It was conditioned upon the one great act of deliverance in which the Egyptians had suffered frightful retribution and Israel had been miraculously reclaimed. Moses was told, "'Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel: You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself"' (Exodus 19:3, 4; RSV). This was deemed of sufficient power to make Israel recognize an indebtedness to God and to inspire them to trust in His might for the future. With them, nationhood began, not in a resolution of human determination, but in a mighty act of God. For that reason the proposal was made, "'Now therefore, if you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my own possession among all peoples; for all the earth is mine, and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel"' (vv. 5, 6; RSV).

Since there was no central means of communication

available, and no mass media through which one person might speak to more than two million persons, Moses summoned the elders and relayed to them the message of God. He asked them to ascertain the will of the people and report back to him the results of their poll. The people unanimously agreed, saying, "'All that the Lord has spoken we will do'" (v. 8). Moses reported their decision to God, who informed him that He would personally address the people on the third day in a manner that they could not forget. As a preliminary for the occasion, the mountain was to be regarded as sacred. A boundary line must be drawn, across which the people were not to set foot. The death sentence was decreed for any man or animal crossing the line. During the interval the people were to wash their garments and abstain from all sexual relations. The blast of a heavenly trumpet would signal the beginning of the announcement of the covenant.

On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightnings. A thick cloud dropped down to enshroud the mountain. A loud trumpet blast echoed among the peaks. Sinai was enveloped in smoke, and the entire mountain shook and trembled. The startled people were brought forth to stand and gaze at the awesome spectacle while wondering what the future held for them. Moses spoke, and God answered in the rumbling of thunder.

Moses never forgot the inaugural ceremony for the covenant. Shortly before his death he addressed the people in these words, "'For ask now of the days that are past, which were before you, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and ask from one end of heaven to the other, whether such a great thing as this has ever happened or was ever heard of. Did any people ever hear the voice of a god speaking out of the midst of the fire, as you have heard, and still live? Out of heaven he let you hear his voice, that he might discipline you; and on earth he let you see his great fire, and you heard his words out of the midst of the fire'" (Deuteronomy 4:32, 33; 36; RSV).

Analysis of the Covenant

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The eager student of God's revelation should have an overwhelming desire, an unquenchable passion, to ascertain the truth. He should not be deterred in his search for this "golden fleece" by his own past conclusions or by present popular error. This is said because of certain statements that will be made. Though based upon Scriptural testimony, these will challenge a view so deeply entrenched that even to question it will appear like heresy. Yet, it is not too much to say that our whole personal relationship to God may be directly affected by what is written in the remainder of this volume.

All of us realize that the words "testament" and "covenant" are used interchangeably in the Authorized Version. Thus the apostle Paul speaks of "the reading of the old testament" in 2 Corinthians 3:14, and the writer of Hebrews calls it a "covenant" in Hebrews 8:9. The original word is the same in both instances. In your copy of the sacred Scriptures, the title page probably bears this statement: "The Holy Bible, containing the Old and New Testaments." This statement is correct, but not in the sense it is intended. There are not thirty-nine books in "the old testament." There are not twenty-seven books in the "new testament." In fact, the new covenant, or new testament, was never written with pen and ink at all. The record given by the Spirit states this very clearly.

Because men have labeled the thirty-nine books constituting the Jewish Scriptures the "Old Testament,"

virtually the whole world has been led to believe that this entire compilation constituted the covenant with God. No idea could be more incorrect. None is fraught with greater possibility for error in understanding the unfolding of God's purpose. Laboring under this delusion, many people have completely missed the purpose of God, which is conveyed in "the new covenant." They have merely substituted one legalistic written code for another as the basis of their service to God and communion with one another.

Any understanding of the "new covenant" must be attained through a proper concept of the old. If the second is not to be like the first, a correct survey of the first will prepare for a rational investigation of the second. What was the nature of the "old covenant"? Why was it given? What did it embrace? What were its bounds and limitations? A proper evaluation of these matters will make it possible for us to place "the Jacob's staff" of our spiritual survey at the exact spot from which to look at the "better covenant, which was established upon better promises" (8:6; KJV).

Let us remember that nowhere in all the sacred writings does God ever suggest that all of the Holy Scriptures from Moses to Malachi constitute "the old testament," or covenant. No inspired writer ever hinted that the "old testament" contains thirty-nine books. Some of these books recount the history and chronicles of the covenant people. One is a collection of songs and psalms used in the praise service of the covenant people. Some contain the literature and proverbs collected by the covenant people. Many are prophetic warnings and promises made to people of the covenant. But the history of such a covenant people is no more a part of their constitution than a book on American history is part of the Constitution of the United States. Such a history may refer to our Constitution, detail our departures from its principles, and urge our return to its original spirit, but it is not the Constitution or our national covenant.

A nation is a social unit, created when a number of clans or tribes associate themselves together for mutual progress and protection. In the very nature of things, the first requirement is a compact, or agreement. Such an agreement is called a covenant, or constitution. When God calls a nation out for himself, it is evident that such a nation must constitute a theocracy. Being such and not a democracy, God must announce the terms of the relationship involved.

The preamble of the constitution was a proclamation of what God had done for them. God never enjoins a covenant upon the human family except upon the basis of prior deeds in their behalf. In this instance, the preface would serve for all ages to identify the people involved and the God whom they were to serve. In solemn tones, the words were uttered, "'I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage'" (Exodus 20:2; RSV). The covenant was made possible by a divine act of deliverance. Freedom was accorded by what God did for them, not by what they did for God.

There followed Ten Commandments, which with the preamble constituted what the inspired writers call "the old covenant" or "the first testament." Since a nation is a social unit, its people sustain a dual relationship— to God and one another. The Ten Commandments are divided into two classes, the first four pertaining to man's responsibility to God; the last six to man's responsibility to man.

PERTAINING TO GOD

The initial Commandment was the keystone in the arch of national purpose. It struck at the very heart of polytheism, and forever made monotheism the foundation of covenant relationship on the part of Israel. "'You shall have no other gods before me'" (Exodus 20:3; RSV). This made the worship of idols

an act of treason, a revolt against the sovereign power, and an overt manifestation of conspiracy to overthrow the nation by subverting it from its original purpose and intent. By statute it was made a capital offense.

The second and third statements were made against treasonable intent. Knowing the tendency of man to worship what he creates, it was forbidden to make any graven image or the likeness of any creature in the universe. To bow down before the work of the sculptor or graver, or to give any homage thereto, was also a capital offense. The third Commandment was designed to forbid any lessening of respect or awe for the name of Jehovah. "'You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain'" (v. 7; RSV). To "take the name of the Lord" was to call upon God to witness a promise or vow. This was generally done by saying, "As the Lord liveth I will do this or that." To do so in vain meant to take such an oath in the name of God without any intention of fulfilling it. "Men indeed swear by a greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation" (Hebrews 6:16; RSV). Since this was the final appeal for confirmation, reverence for the name of God would soon disappear if He were called upon to sanction a falsehood or empty promise.

The fourth Commandment stipulated the percentage of time to be accorded the Lawgiver and King. One day in seven was to be assigned to Him in honor of two great events. His creative work ended, and He rested on the seventh day. On the same day He brought the people out of Egypt. By hallowing the seventh day they would be commemorating the creation of the earth and the creation of a nation to honor the God of the universe. The method of consecration was the same that God himself originally employed: rest, or relaxation, and absolute cessation from creativity.

PERTAINING TO OTHERS

Before we mention the fifth Commandment, a few words are in order about the method of perpetuating the knowledge of the covenant. There was no provision made for propagandizing people of other nations. No recruiting program was inaugurated. If one who dwelt among the people desired to enroll with them, he could do so by allowing himself and other males in the family to be circumcised. This was voluntary. There was no solicitation for him to do so. It is true that after they had been scattered among all nations, the descendants of Abraham, having burdened their law with cumbersome traditions, enlisted Gentiles whom they transformed into fanatical zealots worse than themselves, but this was not the original intent.

Carrying forward the patriarchal procedure, the fathers were directly charged with the responsibility of instructing their children. The solemn duty was enjoined immediately following the *Shema*, the watchword of Israel. After pronouncing it Moses said, "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk to them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" (Deuteronomy 6:6, 7; KJV). Each home was to be a school upon whose gates and doorposts these things were written.

This implies that the Torah, as Israel used the term to designate the "Law of Moses," was simple enough in essence for the fathers to expound and for the children to understand. It was only when professional teachers arose and eventually divided into representatives and defenders of various schools of thought that the word became obscured by vain janglings. Inasmuch as the parents were ordained as the sacred teachers, it is not surprising that the next Commandment, following those relating to the proper attitude toward God enjoined reverence for them. "Honour thy father and thy mother" (Exodus 20:12; KJV). The parent stood in the room of God to the offspring, giving them the Torah as God gave it to mankind originally.

The remainder of the Ten Commandments constituted the great moral or ethical code intended to set the people apart from the degenerate worshipers of other gods. Taken together they compose "the old testament" or covenant. All other laws, statutes, and judgments, grew out of a relationship to these. While other laws carried a penalty for violation, the national existence was not necessarily impaired or destroyed by disregard for them. But the Ten Commandments constituted the national covenant, the constitution. Upon this covenant the nation had been formed, and by that covenant it would continue to exist. A disregard for the covenant would bring about the dissolution of national sovereignty, unless the breach was repaired firmly and decisively.

The books of history, poetry, and prophecy, are not part of the covenant. They are Scriptures, or writings, which grew out of the relationship created by the covenant, but they are not "the first testament," as God employs that term. That which established covenant relationship and created the nation was one thing. The sacred books written to the covenant people, or nationals, constituted a wholly different thing. Because we have familiarly and thoughtlessly spoken of the thirty-nine books as composing "the old testament" and have subscribed to this popular error, it is necessary to reexamine the Scriptures related to this matter.

But one may ask what difference it makes. This is the refuge of those who would rather continue in error than discover truth. We have already established that God's entire relationship with man has been revealed as being on a covenantal basis. Does it make a difference whether we have a correct or an incorrect view of what constitutes a covenant of God? Can any professed follower of our Lord be respected who ridicules, derides, or scoffs at a matter so grave that it strikes at the very root of our approach to Deity? Is one deserving of reverence as an instructor in holy things who deliberately chooses to ignore truth and continues to teach error? Such may

be worthy of those who would place a sect above all else. Surely it has no place in the life or thought of men and women who love the truth more than life itself.

There is an even more serious and sobering aspect. The covenantal relationship of old was a school of instruction for those who live under "the new covenant." If we mistake the nature of the "old covenant," its scope and breadth, we can as easily be wrong about the new. If this happens, we may ignore the ongoing purpose of God and merely substitute one system of legality for another as the ground of justification. By doing this we will again bind a yoke upon men "which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear" (Acts 15:10; KJV).

It is easy to develop a pharisaical attitude about the New Covenant Scriptures as about the Old. If we condition our relationship with God on the basis of knowing a compilation of sacred writings, rather than faith in Jesus, we actually make the Bible our God. As a result, we become inconsistent and insecure. Every interpretation, exegesis, or opinion that disagrees with our own is considered treason. Our problem is that we make the basis of our hope an agreement with men, not a covenant with God. One may be wrong about many things who is in a covenant relationship, but the covenant is not broken by his error. God's covenants are made with a variety of men. They do not all think alike, nor can they all do so.

The Covenant of Law

Contents

The terms "old testament" and "old covenant" are used interchangeably in the sacred Scriptures. The "old covenant" was written upon two tablets of stone. On the basis of that covenant the chosen people had been called out of slavery to constitute a nation. Nothing that had been said prior to the giving of the two stone tablets was a part of the covenant. Nothing that was written subsequently was a part of it. Certainly all that God had said before and all He said afterward sustained a relationship to the covenant, but the covenant itself was a distinct instrument. Of this, Moses is our first and best witness, for he received the original draft of the constitution.

Thirty-eight years later, in the plains of Moab, Moses rehearsed in the ears of the surviving children of the original covenantees, a summary of the things that transpired: "And ye came near and stood under the mountain; and the mountain burned with fire unto the midst of heaven, with darkness, clouds, and thick darkness. And the Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only ye heard a voice. And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone" (Deuteronomy 4:11-13; KJV).

More explicit yet is the account in Deuteronomy 5: "The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us,

who are all of us here alive this day" (vv. 2, 3). Certainly, then, the first sixty-nine chapters of the Bible are not a part of "the first covenant" mentioned in Hebrews 8:7, for they deal with the fathers previous to the encounter at Sinai, and the Lord did not make the covenant with the fathers.

Just as Moses eliminates from the covenant the sacred writings dealing with prior history, he also eliminates all future writings from it. He repeats the Ten Commandments as the covenant, then concludes: "These words the Lord spake unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice: *and he added no more*. **And he wrote them in two tables of stone, and delivered them to me" (v. 22). Although God "added no more," men have added some thirty-seven books of history, chronicles, poetry, songs, wise sayings, prophecies, and apocalyptic writings to the covenant made at Horeb. When they speak of "the old testament," they include all of these in their concept.**

Even worse than this, they carry that same concept over to "the new covenant." They make our very relationship to God and one another dependent upon their idea, denying that anyone who disagrees with their theological slant can be in covenant with God. This defeats the very purpose of God and negates the reconciliation effected by the cross. If God deals with us as a covenant-making God, and men confuse the covenant with writings addressed to the covenant people, our relationship is not conditioned upon faith but upon our intellectual apprehension of abstract matters.

We respectfully submit that a consideration of the following points will help all of us to realize that "the first testament" did not include all of the Scriptures now called the Old Testament.

1. The two tables of stone are distinctly said to be the tables of the covenant (Deuteronomy 9:11). They are called the "tables

of stone, even the tables of the covenant" (v. 9).

2. The sacred chest, or coffer, containing the tablets of stone was called "the ark of the covenant" (Numbers 10:33; Deuteronomy 10:8). When Solomon erected the temple, he said, "In it have I put the ark, wherein is the covenant of the Lord, that he made with the children of Israel" (2 Chronicles 6:11). The ark had disappeared before many of the books of prophecy were even written. Not one of the books of prophecy was ever in the ark, because not one was a part of the covenant.

3. The covenant was distinctly said to have been made and given in Horeb (Deuteronomy 5:2). The apostle Paul identified this as Mount Sinai in Arabia (Galatians 4:24, 25). But most of the rest of the Old Covenant Scriptures were written in Palestine, Babylon, or Persia.

4. The covenant was said to have been made when God "took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt" (Jeremiah 31:32). The Scriptures were written much later and in many other places.

5. Certainly the prophecy of Jeremiah was no part of the "first testament," for by the time Jeremiah wrote, the people had already broken the covenant of God. The prophet predicted that a new covenant would be made (Jeremiah 31:31).

The words of "the old testament" which God made with Israel were first announced orally by the voice of God. These words embraced the Ten Commandments and the preamble that identified God. The finger of God then wrote the words upon two stone tablets (Deuteronomy 9:10). The covenant was limited to the content of the oral message that was subsequently engraved upon the two tablets, for *the Lord added no more***.**

When the people had heard the words of God, they were so frightened that the heads of the tribes approached Moses and besought him, "Go thou near, and hear all that the Lord our

God shall say: and speak thou unto us all that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee; and we will hear it, and do it" (Deuteronomy 5:27; KJV). The Lord agreed to this arrangement. He instructed Moses to go and tell the people to return to their tents. However, He told Moses, "Stand thou here by me, and I will speak unto thee all the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which thou shalt teach them" (v. 31). There was a difference between the covenant and the various statutes, commands, and ordinances. The covenant established the nation's relationship as the elect of God, and the other commands regulated the people within that relationship. The apostle Paul recognized this distinction when he wrote, "They are Israelites, and to them belong the sonship, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises" (Romans 9:4; RSV).

The covenant made at Sinai, through which national theocratic status was conferred upon Israel, was of such a nature as to require a definite written code to accomplish its design. The law is personified as a "child-conductor" or "custodian" (Galatians 3:24; RSV). It was a guardian or trustee (Galatians 4:2; RSV). Those who were under its jurisdiction were regarded as children, or minors, thus possessing no more freedom than slaves (Galatians 4:1). Now, just as no one would entrust a child to the care of another who was immature, so the nation at its inception required a law that was complete. A foundation is not constructed gradually, after a structure has been erected. A nation founded upon law must have the law to produce the nation. Accordingly, the Lord revealed to the original mediator the law in its fullness.

The first covenant was a legalistic arrangement. It was designed to keep its subjects in confinement and under restraint, and so the covenant itself was legalistic. It consisted of law. The covenant given through Moses was law, but not all the laws given through Moses were part of the covenant. This will explain such statements as that of Paul, "I had not known sin, but by the

law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet" (Romans 7:7; KJV). This statement is a part of the covenant. It is one of the Ten Commandments. But the covenant was the groundwork of a legal system. Because of this, other portions of the Scriptures which grew out of this legal covenant are referred to as "law." They are parts of a legal system.

It is important that we understand the nature of a system of law as opposed to a system of faith for justification before God. If we fail to do so, we may simply substitute one law for another, and this would be a fatal error. Any person who seeks to be justified by law must keep that law to perfection. If one proposes to establish a relationship based upon deeds of law, he must maintain a meticulous and unvarying obedience to every command, regardless of how minute it may seem. His very life will depend upon such obedience, for he is trading his deeds for life. "The law does not rest on faith, for 'He who does them shall live by them'" (Galatians 3:12; RSV). To put that in reverse, it simply teaches that a man can live under the law only if he does absolutely everything the law requires. The slightest deviation brings condemnation and death.

One cannot set up in his heart a system of justification by law, and then expect God's grace to rescue him in his failures. Grace operates through faith and not by law. If we are now under any kind of a written code, seeking for justification, our only hope (if hope it may be called) is to live in constant fear and dread, and keep every provision of that written code without fail.

This being true, the question naturally arises, "Why then the law?" Why did God institute a covenant consisting of a written code? The question is not new. It was first propounded by an avid student of the law in Galatians 3:19. The inspired answer is found at the same place: "It was added because of transgressions, till the offspring should come to whom the

promise had been made" (RSV). The "offspring" is identified in the context as Jesus Christ. The law was added to the promise made to Abraham, and was intended to act as a custodian to guard and guide the people in their immaturity until they could be brought to Christ.

But justification did not come by the law, "for if justification were through the law, then Christ died to no purpose" (Galatians 2:21; RSV). It is plainly said, "by works of the law shall no one be justified" (2:16; RSV). Again, "It is evident that no man is justified before God by the law" (3:11). No written code can ever produce life. The law in its ultimate could produce only death. Since justification by law demands absolute conformity to the minutest degree, and since no man could fulfill the law's demand to this extent, "The very commandment which promised life proved to be death to me" (Romans 7:10; RSV); "For if a law had been given which could make alive then righteousness would indeed be by the law" (Galatians 3:21).

Weakness of the Law

Contents

We must not fall into the error of thinking that the law given to and by Moses had built-in imperfections because of its origin or agency of transmission. It originated with God, and Moses was such an outstanding person that God said He spoke to him "face to face, as a man speaks to his friend." The perfect God did not give an imperfect law. The law was perfectly adapted to the purpose for which it was intended. Its inability to justify lay in the fact that it was *a law*, a written code, not that it was the law of God.

So long as man is in the flesh, in his human nature, he cannot be justified by such a written code, regardless of its origin. The weakness is not in the code but in the flesh. Just as law places restraints on what man is allowed to do in the flesh, so the nature of man places restrictions on what the law is able to accomplish. There are things that law cannot do with us because we are in the flesh.

The law given by Moses was of divine origin. It was not unholy or unjust, for "It was ordained by angels through an intermediary" (Galatians 3:19; RSV). It was not an unspiritual arrangement, for "we know that the law is spiritual" (Romans 7:14; RSV). We can only conclude, "The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good" (Romans 7:12). How could that which came from God, was furnished by angels, was holy, just, good, and spiritual, fail to produce life? The answer is that its failure is not in its source or character. It failed simply

because man is what he is. The very essence of man's justification by law is absolute and unvarying conformity. This requires man's perfect knowledge and understanding from the very moment he comes under the law. If he makes one mistake he becomes guilty under the law, and all of his good deeds in the future can never purge that guilt. Man is incapable of such perfection.

The law cannot justify, **because it arouses carnal desires or passions. We must deal with man as he is. Filled with curiosity, the urge to experiment, and the ambition to learn by experience, man is lured to destruction by that which is forbidden. The very commandment intended to restrain all too often incites. The law identifies sin, points it out, and locates it as surely as a "Wet Paint" sign on a park bench warns the passerby. The apostle says, "If it had not been for the law, I should not have known sin. I should not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, 'You shall not covet.' But sin,** *finding opportunity in the commandment*, **wrought in me all kinds of covetousness" (Romans 7:7, 8; RSV). The tragic feature is that the penalty is death. There is no mercy in law, only justice! "For sin, finding opportunity in the commandment, deceived me and** *by it killed me*" **(7:11; RSV). This is the inexorable fate of the legalist, one who seeks to be justified by law. He cannot escape it. His own testimony as to his imperfection will condemn him.**

The law could not give life. **It is not within the province of any written code to do so. But the law could and did bring knowledge of sin. "For no human being will be justified in his sight by works of the law, since through the law comes knowledge of sin" (3:20; RSV). The plain force of this passage is that the greater one's knowledge of law, the more he realizes his own sinfulness and human weakness. The word "law" has many shades of meaning in the sacred Scriptures. Ignorance of this leads to some absurd and false conclusions. The strict and proper meaning is "a rule of conduct, prescribed by superior authority." In the final analysis, the character of the authority**

determines the objective of the law. God is holy, and He desires that we be holy. His nature is the criterion for our measurement. When we apply the law to our conduct, we are made to see our own failures and shortcomings. The more we learn of the law the greater becomes our sense of guilt and inadequacy.

The law could and did bring wrath: **"For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression" (4:15; RSV). The law provided for the conscience a standard external to itself. If there were no law, there would be no sense of transgression and no guilt. With a code of laws before him, man can determine the utter futility of trying to become perfect by law-keeping, and thus be led to see the need of a Savior.**

The law made nothing complete, or perfect. **In that respect it was weak and useless. This is affirmed by the writer to the Hebrews: "On the one hand, a former commandment is set aside because of its weakness and uselessness (for the law made nothing perfect)" (Hebrews 7:18, 19; RSV). But this did not militate against the law in fulfilling its assigned role. Its purpose was to hold man in restraint until Christ came. Justification was not to be found in the law, but in the love that manifested itself in the Son of God.**

The covenant, which bound Israel to the true and living God in a relationship of intimacy that was comparable to marriage, was repeatedly violated by the nation. That constant violation demonstrated that a covenant consisting of a written code could never make man guiltless before God. For this reason, Jeremiah, the priestly prophet, predicted the advent of a new covenant, which would be of a different nature. Written codes are external, but the new covenant was to be internal. It was not to be written upon stone tablets or papyrus sheets, but upon human hearts.

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of

Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (Jeremiah 31:31-34; KJV).

As a prelude to our discussion of that new covenant which God has made with us in Christ, let us consider an analysis of this prophetic promise.

The covenant to come was to be a *new* one. It was not to be an extension of the old, nor was it to be a renewed application or imposition of the terms of any previous agreement. The first covenant was made when the fathers were delivered from slavery in Egypt; the new one would be made when men were delivered from the bondage of sin. The new covenant would be unlike the former one. The former covenant was the constitution for a physical nation upon earth; the second was for a spiritual kingdom made up of those called out from every nation upon the earth.

The legal code ordained at Horeb did not succeed in binding the people to God. Instead, they lived by their lusts and trusted in the fact that they had the law in their possession. They worshiped the tables of the covenant and the ark in which they were contained. In time of battle they carried it to the field of conflict, exactly as other nations bore their images of worship and in which they trusted for victory. The nation broke the covenant, even though God was faithful as a husband. The

nation chose other gods, but God chose no other nation.

The new covenant was not to be a written code. Its sanctuary was not to be the room behind the second veil of an earthly temple, but the inner being of a consecrated person. God placed the tablets of stone in the Holy of Holies under the Shekinah, the glory of His presence. Now His law, His principle of action, is not enshrined in a book but within the spirit of man. The body is the temple of God. The inner man is the holy of holies. Here God's glory is seen and experienced through the indwelling Spirit. Once God put His law in a sacred chest created by men. Now His love, as a divine law, is enshrined in a spiritual treasure-house of His own creation. He said, "I will put my law in their inward parts." The covenant is not chiseled in stone. It is not written upon paper. It is not printed but imprinted. It is engraved on the heart.

The new covenant is individual in nature. It is secure in the inner being, that is, in the heart of the faithful person. One does not belong to God because he belongs to a covenant people. He belongs to the covenant people because he belongs to God. He does not arrive at a covenantal status by subscribing to a code, but by surrender to the Christ. God is the God of those who have bared the walls of their hearts to the inscription written by the finger of God. Those who have covenanted with Him are His people. Any person upon this earth who has entered into the covenantal relationship with God is a child of God, and that covenant pledges his allegiance to God. So long as life continues he must have no other gods.

The old covenant, based upon the flesh of Abraham, was entered at birth. It was ratified on the eighth day of the life of the male child, by circumcision, a cutting of his flesh. The child knew nothing about the covenant. He did not know God. He was first introduced into the covenant and then taught to know the Lord. The new covenant was to be different. It was not to be based upon the flesh, but upon the spirit. It was to be the result

of a personal choice, an individual acceptance of God. It would not be necessary to teach those under the new covenant to know God, for they had to know Him to be in the covenant.

There is nothing in Jeremiah's prophecy to suggest or intimate that brothers and neighbors would not teach each other under the new covenant how to live a life above reproach. It is simply that they will not need to teach those in the covenant to know the Lord. The promise is that all who are in the new relationship will have had their iniquity forgiven. God will remember their transgressions no more.

We have come to the place in the study to give attention to the new and different covenant. We have the assurance that it is "a better covenant, which was established upon better promises" (Hebrews 8:6; KJV).

The Time of Reformation

Contents

In a wonderful treatise contained in three chapters of Hebrews (8, 9, 10), the writer summarizes what he had previously written about the superiority of the new covenant over the old. He begins the section with the words, "Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum" (KJV). Twice in this limited framework he refers to the promise of God through Jeremiah, that He intended to make "a new covenant" (8:8-12; 10:15-17). Of special significance is the catalog of observances and ordinances under the "old covenant," which were "imposed on them until the time of reformation" (9:10).

The next four words are, "But Christ being come." The covenant of law was temporary and transitory. It was to exist only until the time for the great change had come. It was a time of reformation, which was to be ushered in by the coming of Christ. He was to be "the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises" (8:6). It is this "better covenant" which creates and cements our relationship to God, and we should turn our attention to God's revelation concerning it with a great deal of eagerness.

The advent of Jesus to the earth constituted the watershed of human history. Jesus is the "Great Divide." He is the "new covenant," the Word of God, which became flesh and "dwelt among us, . . . full of grace and truth." All who receive Him receive of the fullness that is in Him. They become partakers of grace and truth. "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and

truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17; KJV).

The casual reader may overlook the profound significance of this statement. The law was *given* by Moses. The medium was not the message. Moses was not the law. The law was external to Moses. It was even written by another and handed to him. The law outlived Moses. It survived his death. But grace and truth *came* by Jesus Christ. They were not given by Him as the law was given by Moses. He was full of grace and truth. When Jesus came, grace and truth came. These constituted His "fullness," His nature, His essence.

Law is always external. It is always imposed from outside. It can never make man good. It can only make him wish he had been good. The coming of Jesus brought an end to law as a basis of anyone's relationship to God. Law, as a written code, was suspended and superseded by grace and truth. We are no longer governed by a written code. We are not under law, but under grace.

Jesus did not simply eliminate the law of Moses as a futile manner of attempting to secure righteousness. He did away with the "law principle." He did not substitute one written code for another. Instead of giving us a law, He gave himself. It is not by trust in deeds of law, but by faith in Him as a person that we secure and sustain a right relationship with the Father. Law has gone and faith has come. Moses stands in history as the giver of law. Jesus stands in history as the giver of life!

Law confines, restricts, and inhibits. It is a police power that keeps man down by keeping him under. It is a prison compound in which man is shut up. It is a custodian charged with guarding him and delivering him safely to his destination. No man is free under law. Law and liberty are antithetical to one another. The role of law is described in poignant terms in Galatians 3:23-26. Obviously, Paul is here speaking of the law given by Moses, the law that was announced 430 years after the

covenant made with Abraham (3:17). But what he has to say will apply to any written code, as we shall see.

Paul uses the expressions "before faith came" (v. 23) and "after that faith is come" (v. 25). The period "before faith came" is identified as the time when men were kept under the law. The word "kept" means guarded, or under surveillance, as by *keepers of a prison***. Certainly there were men of faith under the law but there is a difference between men coming to faith, and faith coming to men. The first is a personal trust in God. The last is a principle of justification in Christ, which came as a historical event. That faith had not come while man was under a written code. He was "shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed" (v. 23).**

If the law was helpless to justify, or make men righteous, what was its function? The answer is simple. "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (v. 24). Unfortunately, this rendering in the *King James Version* **can be misleading because of the meaning we attach to "schoolmaster." We think of such a person as a teacher in school, but that is not the meaning of the original at all.**

The word *paidagogos* **was applied to a trusted slave who was made the guardian of a boy and charged with his upbringing. When a lad in a Roman or Greek household reached a certain age he was consigned to the keeping of such a slave. That slave was expected to control and direct the boy's life, regulate his conduct, and supervise his behavior until he reached the age of puberty. The word literally means a "child-conductor." Our best English equivalent is "custodian."**

The law was like a custodian, to guard and guide God's people until they were safely delivered to Jesus, so they could be justified by faith in Him. After faith came we "are no longer under a custodian." If we are under another written code, we are under a custodian. If we make the New Covenant Scriptures

a code of laws we constitute them a custodian. It is one of those very Scriptures which here declares that we are no longer under a custodian. We are not in custody, we are in Christ. The custodian is dead.

If our covenantal relationship with God is not established on the basis of a legal code, what is its nature? Fortunately we are not left in ignorance on this important matter. In 2 Corinthians 3, the apostle Paul describes the two covenants and graphically portrays the difference between them. Every person who is interested in establishing a right relationship with God should pay special attention to what is here revealed. That this is a contrast between the two covenants is evident. In the sixth verse Paul speaks of "the new testament." In the fourteenth verse he speaks of "the old testament."

The chapter begins with two questions. These were probably provoked by false apostles at Corinth who resented Paul and questioned the validity of his apostleship. "Do we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you?" At the time when the apostle asked this question, letters of introduction, recommendation, and approval were common. Travel was wide-spread, and those who went from place to place carried documents that were signed by well-known political and business figures. These documents served to make the traveler's way easier when going into other countries.

There is every reason to believe that the primitive saints adopted the practice, writing letters of commendation which made it possible for the bearer to be received without question. Such a letter was sent by the congregation at Jerusalem regarding Judas and Silas (Acts 15:22-31). When Apollos prepared to go from Ephesus to Greece, "the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him" (Acts 18:27). The letter to Philemon was such a letter.

There was nothing wrong with letters of commendation, but the apostle did not need such a letter to Corinth from other congregations, nor did he require a letter from them to others. The saints at Corinth constituted his endorsement. They were his credentials. "Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men" (2 Corinthians 3:2; KJV). The Corinthian saints were an epistle of Christ and the only letter of commendation required by Paul. "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds" (12:12). What was engraved upon their hearts by his apostolic labor could be read by all men who would certainly know that an apostle of Christ had planted the congregation.

"Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart" (3:3; KJV). Here we have the contrast between the "old covenant" and the "new." The saints are the living letters of the living God. They are the epistles of Christ. Jesus is the author, the apostles His transcribers. They ministered the epistle because God had made them "able ministers of the new testament" (v. 6).

The new covenant was not written with ink. It is not a written code. It does not consist of the Gospels, the book of Acts, the epistles, and Revelation. Every one of these books was written with ink. John's epistles were written with paper and ink (2 John 12) and with pen and ink (3 John 13). These were written to a covenant people, but they are not part of the covenant. That covenant was engraved by the Spirit of God, "not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart."

This is exactly what God promised through Jeremiah. "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people" (Hebrews 8:10; KJV). The new covenant is not an external code.

It cannot be read on tablets of stone or in a book written with pen and ink. In spite of the plain statements of God's Word that we are not under law, and that the new covenant was not written with ink, it is difficult for many persons to see how God's *laws* can be put into the mind or written in the heart, if we are not under law.

The answer lies in the fact that the word "law" has a wide range of meanings. When we read that we are not under law, the apostle is not telling us that we are no longer under the sovereignty of God, but that we are no longer under a written code or legalistic system. We can no longer strive for justification, or seek to arrive at guiltlessness, by observance of such a code laid down or imposed from without. Law, in its primal meaning, is a principle of action. It is the basis, or foundation, the motivating dynamic that governs our whole course of conduct.

God does not write numbered statutes and commandments upon our hearts as the Romans engraved laws upon the twelve bronze tablets in the Forum, or as His finger carved the Ten Commandments upon two tablets of stone at Sinai. Instead, He infuses our hearts with a divine principle of action, and this spontaneously and automatically responds in harmony with His will. Incorporated within that principle, which involves the divine nature or essence, is the fulfillment of all the commands of God, not as a way of life, but as "the life of the Way."

It is for this reason Paul writes, in contrasting the old covenant with the new, that God made the apostles the qualified ambassadors or administrative agents of the "new testament" or covenant. That covenant was not based upon a written code, but upon the Spirit, because a written code can only terminate in death. Instead, the Spirit gives life. Law says, "Do these things and you shall live." The Spirit says, "You live, so do these things." The law starts with man as he is, inducing him to seek to achieve life by his effort. "For Moses describeth the

righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them" (Romans 10:5; KJV).

In plain language this means that under a regime of law, life is dependent upon human performance. Law must be kept meticulously or it is not kept at all. The slightest infraction results in death. The "fly in the ointment" is the fact that man in the flesh cannot keep law perfectly. It is an impossibility, not because of the weakness of the law, but because of the weakness of the flesh. A system based upon law-keeping can never produce righteousness or justification. "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:20). *No flesh!* **Law can make men aware of their weakness and sin. It can produce a sense of failure and guilt upon the part of those who seek to submit to it. Never can it produce guiltlessness in any person who is in the flesh!**

Life is not a product of law. No written code, regardless of its origin, can ever produce life. If life could result from law-keeping, it was a heinous act for God to send Christ to die for our sins. He should have sent the law, or given the written code that could produce life. Paul writes, "If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law" (Galatians 3:21). He also writes, "If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain" (2:21).

The Spirit does not start with man as he is, but when that man trusts in the righteousness of God, which is through faith in Christ Jesus, the Spirit makes of him a new creation. He is dead, and his life is "hid with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:3; KJV). Christ becomes his life, for he has no life of his own. His life is not dependent upon obedience to laws, but because he has been transformed he keeps the commands of Christ who is his life. His service is not an attempt to keep the law, but to conform to the Spirit. He is not in the flesh but in the Spirit, because the Spirit

of Christ abides in him.

Those who are in Christ are dead to the principles of legalistic righteousness. The custodian who held them is dead. His nerveless grasp has been broken from their necks. Now they are delivered and freed from a written code. That basis of justification is deceased, declared invalid by God's marvelous grace. The purpose is that all of us should serve in newness of spirit and not in the oldness of a written code. This, I think, is what Paul is saying in Romans 7:6: "Now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter" (KJV). There is no intimation that service to God is relaxed because the principle of legalistic rectitude is dead. We serve, but it is in newness of spirit. Just because we have matured and the custodian is dead, these facts do not lessen our responsibility. Our very maturity increases that responsibility.

At this point we must inquire as to the principle that is put in our mind and written in our heart, which constitutes the new covenant rule of action. Paul's letters to the Romans and the Galatians are two great dissertations on the difference between law and faith as grounds of justification. It is in these letters the apostle plainly enunciates the one great quality that embraces and fulfills all law.

First let us look at the Roman letter. In it we are told, "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law" (Romans 13:8-10; KJV).

Obviously, the whole purpose of any law given by God is to

establish a right relationship with himself and with men. But law cannot accomplish this because law can only make one conscious of failure and guilt. It cannot make him guiltless. Law is external. Love is internal. When one is justified by faith, which is the only way he can be justified, he attains peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ. Through Jesus he gains access to grace, in which state he can rejoice in hope of the glory of God. This hope never disappoints the one who is at one with God, "because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Romans 5:5).

The first covenant was one of law, the second is one of love. The only debt I can owe another, which it is impossible to settle in full, is that of love. I must never borrow from another what I cannot repay. I do not love God's children because I am in debt to them, but because I am in debt to Him. "Let us love one another: for love is of God" (1 John 4:7); "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another" (v. 11). One should emphasize the word "so" in this statement.

Love fulfills the law. The apostle specifically mentions five Commandments, forbidding adultery, murder, stealing, false testimony, and covetousness. We generally think of these as moral regulations, but lest the legalistic mind try to find an exception, he writes, "And if there be any other commandment." No law can be given to cover every facet of human behavior or every contingency. Faith in Jesus lifts us out of the area of written codes and shows us "the more excellent way."

Love fulfills the law ***because it works no ill to another*****. The love that is here contemplated is the unceasing, undying, uninhibited concern for another's good, manifesting itself in positive action to promote that good. That active and beneficent good will stops at nothing to achieve the good of the beloved object. It is the application of the new God-nature to all human circumstances, problems of association and relationship. Such a broad scope as this can never be captured or confined by a**

written code, any more than such a code can contain the very essence of God.

For fifteen hundred years God sought to hold His people together by law, until faith could come. Law is a police force, drawing a circle and building a fence beyond which the inmates must not go, under penalty of death or banishment. When Jesus came, law was abandoned as basis of unity, and love was installed in its place. Love is a magnetic force, holding men together by drawing them to a common center. That center is the person of Jesus, who announced, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."

Jesus did not confine us with another law. He did not build another fence. He did not provide another yoke of bondage. Instead, He set us free, He freed us, not only from the law given by Moses, but the law principle that is helpless because of the flesh. We are told, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Galatians 5:1; KJV). Any man who postulates his hope of glory upon conformity to a written code is signing his own death warrant. He is building his own scaffold and knotting his own hangman's noose. It makes no difference whether he conceives of the written code as originating with God or man.

"For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (5:13, 14; KJV). Here the apostle says the same thing to the emotional Gauls that he wrote to the Romans. In doing so, he defines the true use of liberty. Those who are freed from definitive written codes full of "thou shalt nots" are sometimes inclined to take advantage of their liberty. Because there is no wall to debar their progress, they may strain and break the cord of love that holds them to the center— the cross.

We have been called to liberty, but it is not our achievement. We did not escape from prison, we were liberated. We did not disentangle ourselves from the yoke; it was lifted from us. We have been called, so we have a vocation of liberty. We dare not use our God-given liberty to serve the flesh. The custodian died only after delivering us to Jesus. We are not free to do as we please; we are now free to do what will please Him. Liberty and service occur in the same context. "Ye have been called unto liberty . . . by love serve one another" (v. 13).

The new covenant has been inscribed on the walls of the heart. It has not been written with ink but with the Spirit. It does not consist of a compilation of legal propositions, but of one word: love! Correctly understood, that word involves all that law was intended to accomplish but could not. It lifts man out of the very domain of law. It places him in a realm where he can bear the fruits of the Spirit. "Against such there is no law" (v. 23). *No law!*

Love fulfills the law *because it removes stumbling blocks***. Love takes away every occasion for stumbling; that is, it creates no hazard, obstacle, or obstruction to cause anyone to trip or fall. Love is light, hatred is darkness. "He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him" (1 John 2:10).**

Love fulfills the law *because it gives assurance of life***. Love assures us that we have crossed the frontier separating death from life. No written code could ever do this. Under a written code one can never be sure he has gone far enough or done enough to be counted worthy of life. He can never be certain there is not something he should have known and did not know, or something he should have done and did not do. Under the law of love, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren" (1 John 3:14). Love for the brethren is not the ferry that transports us from death to life. That ferry is faith. But the ability to "love the brethren" is on**

the opposite side of the border from death. When we have achieved that goal we know we are across the line, because love is the proof of the indwelling Spirit. "And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him" (v. 19).

Love is the fulfilling of the law *because God dwells within us*. **"If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us" (4:12; KJV). When God gave the old covenant it was deposited in a sacred ark. It was kept in an earthly sanctuary constructed by the hands of men. Today we are the only sanctuary God has on earth. The covenant cannot be borne upon the shoulders of a special caste. It is enshrined in the hearts of believers. We are the temple of God. Our bodies are His tabernacle. We cannot carry the covenant in our hands. It is not a book we can lay on the library table or place on the shelf. The new covenant is a pact of love. It exhibits itself in love for one another. It is the love of God perfected, fulfilled, and matured.**

Under the new covenant God dwells in us and we dwell in Him, because He has given us His Spirit (v. 13). The Spirit is life-giving because He is love-giving. We live because we love, and we love because we live. There is no life apart from love. God is love, and His love is manifested toward us because He "sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him" (v. 9). As John adds, "Herein is love," so we may add, "Herein is life."

The first covenant was announced at a physical mount; the new covenant at a spiritual peak in man's history. When the first was announced, those who heard it were cautioned not to draw near or to cross a boundary. When the second was given, they were invited to "Draw near with a true heart in full assurance" (Hebrews 10:22). The first was engraved upon stone, and was as inflexible as the material upon which it was carved. The second was written upon the hearts of believers, and was as warm as the faith that led them to receive Jesus. The first bound the

recipients to God upon the threat that the iniquities of the fathers would be visited upon the children to the third and fourth generations. The second drew the respondents by the promise that their sins would be remembered no more forever. Truly it is a "better covenant, based upon better promises"!

The Freedom of Maturity

Contents

It is extremely difficult for many consecrated believers in Christ to accept the implications of the material in the preceding chapter. There are several reasons why this is so. For one thing, it cuts across the traditional pattern of teaching. We have always been told that "the new testament" consists of twenty-seven books. It seems almost heretical for one to say this is not true. To refute it seems to deny God's Word, even though God nowhere said or implied that such was the case.

It cannot be denied that thousands of people in the world, both Jews and Greeks, were in covenant relationship with God before one word of the New Covenant Scriptures was ever written. Many who died for the faith had never seen an apostolic letter. Many had no idea there would ever be a compilation of such letters. They simply believed that Jesus was the Messiah and God's Son, and pledged allegiance to Him. They renounced any thought of their own righteousness as having been attained by works of the law, and simply put their trust in the righteousness of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

The divine agreement, the covenant that established their relationship with the Father of all mercy, was inscribed by the Holy Spirit upon the walls of the inner chambers of their being. It was written in terms of love, a dynamic so powerful that it not only transformed their lives but completely altered the world in which they lived. The New Covenant Scriptures, now entitled the New Testament, grew out of their covenantal relationship, not

vice versa.

As time went on, the Holy Spirit motivated certain ones to make a record of the divine breakthrough on the human plane. A former tax-collector told the story primarily for the Jews. A young man who grew up in Jerusalem, a close friend of Simon Peter, wrote it for the Romans and the Latin world. A Greek physician interviewed eyewitnesses and then compiled and collated the information he had received for presentation to a Greek state official. To this he later added and certified an account of the struggle of the message of hope to free itself, first from the bonds of Jewish legalism, and second from the toils of Greek philosophy. The account ends with the proclamation free and the proclaimer in prison. Much later, a former fisherman, who survived all of the other apostles, wrote a supplementary account to offset the effects of one of the most subtle foes that ever sought to infiltrate the faith.

As communities of believers were beset with problems growing out of the humanity of the covenant people, the apostles wrote letters to them, furnishing guidelines for rethinking their conduct. Sometimes these grew out of reports received from persons who were familiar with the saints in a given locality. Other times they were replies to letters that had asked for information. In still other circumstances the apostles wrote simply because the situation warranted it. One of these was a letter commending a runaway slave to his master, to whose home he was returning. Another was addressed to a people who were being seduced from the liberty they enjoyed in Jesus.

Those who received the letters did not regard them as legal documents. The writers who penned them had no consciousness of creating a code of laws. They merely wrote letters of deep affection to people whom they loved, without any thought of writing a Bible. Paul, who wrote most of the letters, disclaimed any thought of domination over the faith of the recipients. He said, "Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are

helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand" (2 Corinthians 1:24; KJV).

During the life span of the apostles, the letters were scattered among isolated communities, although they were occasionally shared with other believers in the same general region (Colossians 4:16). It was not until long after the death of John, and after a good deal of debate about the validity of some of the letters, that the canon was completed and the New Covenant Scriptures were collected as we now have them.

It is true that our relationship to God is a covenantal relationship. There is a great deal of difference, however, between the covenant or agreement and the letters written to the covenant people. The covenant is entered by faith in Jesus as the fulfillment of the promises of God. It results from a response to the good news that Christ "hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Timothy 1:10). The gospel was fully proclaimed on Pentecost. Not another word was ever added to it. Those who responded to it, by reformation of life and baptism, entered into the covenant with God, even though they never saw an apostolic letter and certainly never saw a copy of the New Covenant Scriptures.

The gospel is not a legalistic arrangement by which we earn God's favor. It is the good news of God's marvelous grace growing out of the love which God is. The New Covenant Scriptures are not a legalistic code, for we are not under law but under grace. The Scriptures are a collection of "love letters," written in familiar terms. They do not represent the will of God imposed, but the mind of God exposed. They act as guidelines, showing how Christ would react under conditions faced by saints on earth. They are instructional material intended to inform subjects how to prepare for the coming of their King.

Another reason for the reluctance of many people to accept what was said about the covenants is that they would rather be

under law than under grace. It is for this reason they make grace into law and convert the love letters of the apostles into a written code. They are frightened by the freedom that makes them personally responsible for their decisions. They prefer to have things "spelled out" and have a law-book. Then they can go and "look it up" to see how far they can go and still remain within the limits. It is easier to qualify as a good lawyer than as a great lover. It is easier to lay down the law than to live up to love.

This is indicative of emotional and spiritual immaturity. An adolescent outwardly demands freedom but inwardly craves restraint. He wants his parents to lay down laws, even though he professes outward rebellion against their regulations. The reason for this inner turmoil is his association of love with law. Enforcement of law, even though it galls him to comply, indicates to his still immature mind that his parents are shielding and protecting him from the big world he is still afraid to face alone. He would rather be behind walls with a sense of security than to be forced to face life openly and on his own.

In the Roman world in which the apostles lived, a son was turned over to others who were charged with his rearing. Even though the boy was destined to become heir to his father's estate and title of nobility, he was under such a tight reign and subjected to such strict discipline that he was little better off than a slave. Every action was ordered by others. His life was regimented each hour of the day. He made no independent decisions. All of this continued until he reached the age of puberty, when his father publicly presented him as a citizen to the populace.

The whole course of a youth's life was changed from that moment onward. No longer was he under the hand of disciplinarians who could flog him into compliance with their will. Publicly recognized as a son by the father, he could now move among men as a man. This did not mean he was a law unto

himself. He was bound by ties of respect to his family. His actions brought honor or dishonor to the family name. His concern had to be for others. He had to measure his behavior in the light of his influence.

Paul uses this familiar way of life to illustrate God's plan for His people through the ages. After describing the law as a custodian charged with delivering us to Christ, and pointing out that once this was accomplished we were no longer under a custodian, he introduces the example drawn from social life: "Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father" (Galatians 4:1, 2; KJV).

Notice now his application to the people of God: "Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world" (v. 3). In their childhood age, God's chosen people were treated as children. At Mount Sinai they were placed under the tutelage of a custodian. That custodian was the written code. This stern disciplinarian actually reduced the children to a status comparable to that of household slaves. The written code is here referred to as "the elements of this world." The term refers to the fundamental or primary principles upon which any system is founded. In the literary world it was applied to the alphabet, which was basic to all writing. In the natural world it was applied to atoms out of which all matter was composed. In the social world it was applied to fundamentals of moral and ethical behavior.

"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (vv. 4, 5). Under Roman law the father decided the time when he would deliver the son from his custodians, and publicly acknowledge him as a son of the family and a citizen of the commonwealth. In the spiritual realm, it was God who ordained

the time when faith should come.

When the time arrived for the world's attainment of sonship, God sent His Son. It was important that our deliverance be wrought by the Son, because in Him we could see what was entailed in divine sonship. The Son of God became the Son of man so that the sons of men could become the sons of God. Note that God did not send a new or better legal code to deliver us. Instead, He sent His Son. In Christ we do not sustain a legal relationship to the Father, but a personal one. God sent a person to inaugurate that relationship.

In His entrance into our world to share our lot, Jesus was made of a woman. He was not the seed of man. He was not begotten by Joseph, although He was conceived by Mary. He was made under the law, and He fulfilled it. He was the only person who ever did so. He was tempted in all points as we are, but He was without sin. Because He had no sin for which to suffer, He could suffer for our sins. God laid upon Him the iniquity of us all. He delivered us from the curse of the law by having been made a curse for us.

It is through Christ's sacrifice that we receive the adoption of sons. "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ" (vv. 6, 7). God did not hand us another law, a written code to govern us as sons. Such a code belonged to the days of childish immaturity. He sent forth the Spirit of His Son, that is, the Spirit of sonship. The Holy Spirit's indwelling presence marks us out as belonging to the divine family.

The Spirit within brings out the consciousness of a father-son relationship. It is not based upon legalistic compliance but upon acceptance through mutuality of love. "We love him, because he first loved us," wrote John (1 John 4:19). In the joy of acceptance, expressed by the word "adoption," the inner being

cries out "Abba, Father." The first term expresses the initial exclamation of the little child for the parent, conveying affection and dependence. The last is the mature recognition of warm relationship.

God has delivered us from the status of slaves. He no longer treats us as minors. The coming of Jesus was the signal for the coming of age of the people of God. The fullness of the time was the time of their fullness. Unfortunately, many people are not able to accept the sense of responsibility involved in the freedom of sonship. In their spiritual adolescence they seek to convert the very love letters addressed to them into a legalistic arrangement, which would thrust them back into slavery.

Only a little thought is required to demonstrate that the new covenant cannot be postulated upon such a written code. When a community is founded upon law, the law must be enunciated first. Those who are to constitute the community must consent to it and pledge their allegiance to it. If the procedure were the reverse of this, the community could have imposed upon it regulations that the members would abhor, and to which they could not subscribe in good conscience. As was stated, we do not erect a structure and then construct a foundation; we first lay the foundation.

The nation of Israel is a good example. It was God's design to create for himself a nation that would preserve the concept of monotheism until the Messiah should come. He would be identified as the Son of the one God who made Heaven and earth. Accordingly, God called His people out of slavery in Egypt and led them across the Red Sea. Instead of taking them by the ancient caravan route, which gave direct access to the land of Canaan but led through hostile Philistine territory, He conducted them southward to Mount Sinai, or Horeb. He called Moses to come up into the mountain in the presence of all the people and gave him instructions to relay to the multitude. The people were to wash their clothes so they could appear clean in

the presence of the Lord. They were to abstain from sexual relationship with their wives. They were not to touch the mountain, under the penalty of death. A boundary line was drawn around the base of the mountain so no man or beast could make physical contact with it. Then, "Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God" (Exodus 19:17; KJV).

When the assembly heard the voice of God thundering from the peak, they were frightened. They requested that Moses be allowed to go and receive the message of God and relay it to them. "And Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the Lord hath said will we do" (Exodus 24:3).

Moses wrote all the words God had spoken, and arose very early in the morning to construct an altar in the shadow of the hill. Young men were dispatched to offer a sacrifice upon the altar. Moses caught half of the blood in a basin and sprinkled the remainder upon the altar to sanctify it. He then took the book of the covenant and read it in the hearing of the people. They responded to the reading by saying, "All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient" (v. 7). Moses thereupon took the blood in the basin and sprinkled it upon the people and the book, saying, "Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words" (v. 8).

The sprinkling of the book consecrated it to the people, while the sprinkling of the people consecrated them to the book. The covenant founded upon law was inaugurated, and from thenceforth the nation was bound to keep all the words of that law or die. To violate a covenant with God is a tragic renunciation of a promise. To break a covenant with Him is to become a traitor to the Eternal God.

In the case of the "new covenant," which God specifically

declared was not to be like the one made with the fathers when they were led forth from Egypt, there was no written code announced and read. Ours is a personal relationship with Jesus, through whom grace and truth came. Instead of writing a book and sprinkling it with blood, Peter publicly announced the facts concerning the life, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. He ended by saying, "This same Jesus God raised up and made Him both Lord and Christ." The application of the blood of the new covenant was figuratively to the hearts of the believers.

The New Covenant Scriptures could not have constituted a legal code upon which the church was erected, simply because they were not yet written. They were written many years later. It is true that those who were baptized "continued stedfastly in the teaching of the apostles," also in the sharing of the common life in Christ, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers, but this was in no sense a ritualistic performance based upon legal specifications. It was the natural expression of hearts filled with the Holy Spirit after being cleansed and purged by divine forgiveness.

A written code was the foundation of the nation composed of those called out from slavery in Egypt. The foundation of the kingdom composed of those called out of bondage to sin was a simple fact, the greatest in all history. That fact is that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the living God. When Simon Peter openly testified to it, Jesus pronounced a blessing upon him and declared that his statement was a Heaven-revealed truth. He said, "Upon this rock I will build my church." On that fact He would plant the called-out ones. The church is composed of those who are not under law, but under grace. Their hope is not derived from righteousness based upon law, but from righteousness of faith in Christ.

At one time in my life I thought the New Covenant Scriptures, consisting of the apostolic letters of love and sharing, constituted a blueprint for the church, exactly as the legal code

given at Sinai did for the nation of Israel. I did not stop to realize that a blueprint must be in the hands of the construction superintendent and the carpenters before the building is started. I freely quoted what God said to Moses when he was about to make the tabernacle, and applied it to ourselves. The instruction to Moses was "See that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount" (Hebrews 8:5; KJV).

In spite of what may be said about "pattern theology" and a "divine blueprint," the New Covenant Scriptures do not constitute either a pattern or blueprint by which the church was constructed. If they do, the church was not built by the blueprint, because it was in existence a good many years before a single epistle was written. Each letter was addressed to only one community of believers. Not one area had all of the Scriptures available to it for many decades. There were congregations that lived and perished who never saw one segment of "the blueprint," and did not know that such existed.

The writer of Hebrews contrasts the old covenant and the new. Unfortunately, many readers think he is comparing them and pointing out similarities. Reference is made to the time when Moses was instructed to build the tabernacle after having been shown a pattern of the tent and all of its furnishings. Many readers assume that when God said, "See that you make all things according to the pattern," He was, by implication, telling us also to build the church according to a blueprint supplied to and by the apostles. This analogy breaks down for several reasons, including the following:

1. Moses was given a preview of the tabernacle because it was to be built by men who had never seen such a structure. It is specifically stated, however, that the true tabernacle was one "which the Lord pitched, and not man" (8:2). Since it was not pitched by man, it was unnecessary to provide a blueprint for man.

2. Since the priests offered gifts according to the law and served "unto the example and shadow of heavenly things," it is sometimes argued that we are under a written blueprint to provide the antitype. In that eventuality our blueprint would have been the pattern shown to Moses, not the New Covenant Scriptures at all. Our task would be to "spiritualize" the pattern shown to Moses and to erect the true tabernacle accordingly. In that case the true tabernacle would be pitched by man, and not the Lord, in contravention of the plain Scriptural statement.

3. The very next sentence after the quotation relating to the "pattern shown to Moses" (v. 5), begins with the words, "But now." When these words occur in Scripture, they indicate a change in God's dealings with mankind. It is true that under the first covenant Moses was shown a replica of the tabernacle and instructed to make everything according to it. The writer of Hebrews continues, "But now hath he [Christ] obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises" (v. 6).

Under the new covenant God did not provide a pattern or blueprint of a structure. Instead, He gave His Son, and it is the Son who is our pattern, or example. Speaking about the persecution and hardship that are to be endured by one who is identified with Jesus, Peter writes, "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps" (1 Peter 2:21; KJV).

The temple of God today is composed of living stones, of individuals who are cleansed and purified by the blood of Christ. The only sanctuary is a consecrated human heart, and for this the blueprint is the life of Jesus. The first covenant began with a book; the new covenant began with a baby. The first created holy days and holy places, the second created holy persons. The first covenant, like the first Adam, was of the earth, earthy; the second covenant, like the second Adam, was the Lord from

Heaven.

Our hope lies in conformity to the Christ, not in conformity to a code. We do not walk in statutes but in the Spirit. We are free from the demands of the flesh which made law necessary. The flesh has no claim upon us, since Jesus died in the flesh. Those who continue to walk after the flesh shall die. We are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if it is true that the Spirit of Christ dwells in us. When the dominion of the flesh was destroyed and we were liberated, we were freed from the bondage in which we were once held. To form a new written code from the letters that the apostles wrote to congregations and individuals, would be to forge anew the fetters that would bring us once again into captivity to law.

Answering Objections

Contents

It would be both unfair and unwise to pretend that there are no objections to the position advocated in this volume. The fact is that serious questions are raised, and many of these come from sincere students of the divine revelation. They love truth and are eager seekers after it. They do not want to be misled or diverted into a false path. Their questions deserve careful consideration and demand honest answers.

First, let us give attention to those passages of the apostolic letters which seem to indicate we are still under law. Paul clearly states, "By works of the law no flesh shall be justified in his [God's] sight" (Romans 3:20). He also declares that we are "not under the law, but under grace" (6:14). If the very letters Paul wrote constitute a written code, and compose part of the framework of a legalistic system, it is obvious that we are still under law. The apostle then contradicts himself.

It will help us to keep in mind that the word "law" covers a wide spectrum of thought. The term itself is from an Old English form that refers to something laid or fixed, without reference to the source of the action. Our modern word "lay" is directly related to it, and we still use the expression, "lay down the law," when we speak of someone disclosing his wishes in an authoritative fashion.

In the New Covenant Scriptures the Greek word is *nomos*, and this refers to any rule of action, including that which

motivates or impels one to engage in certain actions. Perhaps the term "controlling principle" sums up the wide scope of meanings. In this sense all are under law as the natural consequence of being rational, or having the power to reason. Paul affirms, "When Gentiles who have not the law do by nature what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that what the law requires is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness and their conflicting thoughts accuse or perhaps excuse them on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus" (Romans 2:14-16; RSV).

In this same connection he asserts, "So, if a man who is uncircumcised keeps the precepts of the law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision? Then those who are physically uncircumcised but keep the law will condemn you who have the written code and circumcision but break the law" (vv. 26, 27; RSV). A clear distinction is thus made between the written code and the principles of conduct observed as a natural result of our status as human beings, which provides us with both the power to think and the restraint of conscience. Every sane person acts through motivation or impulse, and the principles governing his action can be properly called law. It is obvious that those who have crucified the old man of sin and who are made partakers of the divine nature will act as directed and motivated by that nature, being a part of "the new humanity."

The question that concerns us is whether or not under the benign dominion of grace we are still under a legalistic system. Do the New Covenant Scriptures constitute a written code in the sense that the writings of Moses constituted such a code? Are we justified by conformity to a written code? Is grace simply the substitution of a new written code of laws for another that was declared invalid? This is precisely what a great many people think, and it is the reason why every use of the word "law" is interpreted by them to indicate that we are still under a legalistic

system.

A good case in point is found in Romans 3:27, where Paul speaks of "the law of faith." Simple attention to the context should demonstrate that the apostle is not referring to a written code. Certainly the collection of New Covenant Scriptures cannot possibly constitute "the law of faith" of which he speaks.

Paul affirms that the righteousness of God to which the law and the prophets testified is now seen to be achieved without the law, and this is through faith in Jesus Christ (vv. 21-23). Upon this basis it is available to all who believe in Him, and there is no difference or distinction, since all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

Paul further makes it clear that justification is by grace, which is a gift, freely given through the wonderful redemption in Christ Jesus. No longer does man identify with law in a vain hope of attaining righteousness, but with Christ Jesus who is our righteousness.

Paul anticipates the question, "Where is boasting then?" (v. 27). The answer is that it is excluded. It is obvious that if one attained to righteousness by his own efforts, through proper understanding and implementation of all the demands of law, he would have grounds to boast of his accomplishment. On the other hand, if righteousness is a gift based wholly upon what another has done for him, and which he could not do for himself, he has no reason for pride or boasting. The apostle writes, "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith" (v. 27; KJV).

It is regrettable that the *King James Version* has the rendering "law," since the apostle is dealing with the principle of justification. There are but two conceivable bases upon which justification can be predicated. One is the perfect keeping of law, and the other is absolute trust in a perfect Redeemer. The first is

impossible for men in the flesh, the second negates human pride and boasting. The Revised Standard Version is correct in rendering the passage, "Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On the principle of works? No, but on the principle of faith." The next verse states the conclusion, "For we hold that a man is justified by faith apart from works of law."

Certainly the "law of faith," as the term is employed in the King James Version, has no relation to a written code. The Romans who received the letter never saw a copy of the New Covenant Scriptures. To postulate to them that they were to be justified by conformity to such a compilation of letters would have confused them as much as it does those in our generation who have inserted their own interpretation of Paul's words. The principle of faith in the righteousness of Jesus Christ is one thing; the letters addressed to those who are in Him constitute a wholly different thing.

Romans 8 also causes concern for those who think of a written code every time they see the word "law." The apostle Paul writes, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (vv. 1, 2).

Those who equate "the law of sin and death" with the legalistic code given at Sinai tend to think of "the law of the Spirit of life" as being the New Covenant Scriptures. This is another example of reading into the Scriptures an opinion reflecting a postapostolic conclusion. The apostle stated in the previous chapter that we were freed from the demands of the law, having died to that which held us captive. Now we serve God, not under the old written code, but in the new life of the Spirit. One who is in Christ Jesus is freed from condemnation. There is no condemnation in Christ. He atoned for our sins on the cross, redeemed us from iniquity, and removed our guilt.

It is true that the Spirit inspired and empowered those who wrote the Scriptures, but it is not the Scriptures to which the apostle here alludes. He is saying that the principle of "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" has set us free and delivered us from the dominion of sin and death. Life in Christ is the natural order for the redeemed ones. The law of the Spirit is not a book but life in Christ Jesus. Those to whom Paul wrote were walking according to that law of the Spirit long before they received the letter he penned.

Properly understood, this explains the term "law of God" in the seventh verse, where Paul said, "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." The carnal mind is the mind of the flesh, the rational part of man under the dominating principle of the corrupt nature. Such a mind is not merely apathetic to the will of God, but antagonistic and hostile. The alienation that results from the lower nature breeds enmity against God.

In 1 Corinthians 9:21 the apostle declares he is "not without law to God, but under the law of Christ" (KJV). Those persons who regard the New Covenant Scriptures as a written code project that idea into the expression, "under the law to Christ." This is the result of forgetting or ignoring the context of the passage and Paul's purpose of writing it.

In the preceding verses the apostle had outlined his reasons for not accepting financial support from the Corinthians, a right he abdicated rather than suffer under the accusation that he was proclaiming the gospel for personal gain. His complete adherence to the will of Christ made him free from any claim men might exercise over him. In spite of the fact that he was free from all men, he made himself a slave to all, adapting and accommodating himself to others, so that he might influence them to come to Christ.

"To them that are under the law, as under the law, that I

might gain them that are under the law" (v. 20). This refers to the law given by Moses. When Paul labored among those who were scrupulous in keeping the law, he did not offend them by deliberately flaunting its provisions. He moved within its regulations. Once, while in Jerusalem, he acted upon the counsel of James to prove that he personally lived in observance of the law (Acts 21:24). When among Jews, Paul lived as a Jewish national; when among those under the law, he conducted himself as one subservient to the demands of the law.

"To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law" (v. 21). The term *anomos*, which would be properly rendered "lawless," does not apply to the conduct or character of the people. It refers to the fact that no law had been given them or enacted for them. There is a difference in being without law and being an outlaw. It is a tribute to the versatility and flexibility of Paul that he could fit into the daily life of non-Jews.

The apostle did not want the Corinthians to think that he was antinomian, that is, opposed to rules of life and conduct. He was not a scofflaw. Even while living among those who had not received oracles from God, he recognized the sovereignty of God over every facet of life. He acknowledged also the fact that all authority had been given to Christ. In fact, Christ was Paul's law, the life of Jesus being his example and pattern. None of this argues that the new covenant is another legal code or that the New Covenant Scriptures constitute a legal document rather than a disclosure of the nature of grace.

Perhaps one of the most interesting studies in this regard is the letter of James, addressed directly "To the twelve tribes in the Dispersion" (James 1:1; RSV). That these were Jews who believed in Jesus as the Messiah is quite clear from James 2:1, 2. The word "assembly" is from *sunagoge* rather than from *ekklesia*. James speaks to them of the "perfect law" (1:25), the

"royal law" (2:8), and the "law of liberty" (1:25). That all of these expressions refer to the same thing is at once apparent to the careful reader.

James begins in 1:22 with the solemn admonition that men must be doers of what is enjoined by the Word of God, and not mere hearers. Hearers of the Word only serve to deceive themselves. They listen but do not learn. In common parlance they allow what they hear to "go into one ear and out of the other." The writer declares that such a person is like a man who looks into a mirror and immediately forgets what he was like. Such a man would not remove marks or blemishes from his countenance, because he has forgotten about them.

This is followed by a contrast, quoted from the *Revised Standard Version*, **because this reading seems to best grasp the meaning of the original: "But he who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer that forgets but a doer that acts, he shall be blessed in his doing" (v. 25). What is the "perfect law"? It could not be the completed New Covenant Scriptures, of which the letter by James is a part, because there was no such compilation at the time. It is probable that the addressees of "the Dispersion" never saw another apostolic letter. Some of them, scattered as exiles throughout Asia Minor, may have read the letter designated "the First Epistle of Peter."**

The "perfect law" is not a designation for the completed canon of the New Covenant Scriptures. Those who received the letter from James would have been in their graves many years before there was such a collection of apostolic documents. The word "perfect" is applied to "the law of liberty" because of its origin. It is from God and was personified in Christ. It was personal rather than preceptual, providing a Savior rather than statutes. The perfect law was embodied in a Man rather than inscribed in a manual. It was the life of Christ rather than a list of codes. Christ Jesus has left us an example that we should

follow in His steps (1 Peter 2:21). The perfect law is from the mind of a perfect God, and was lived out before us in a sinless life.

The "law of liberty" is also perfect because of its nature. It is the law of love, and this love is the very essence of God. *God is love*. **Every commandment is summed up in love, so that the one who truly loves fulfills every demand for which law was intended. Love validates every gift and sanctifies every sacrifice. Without love the most gifted individual is nothing, and without love the supreme sacrifice is of no profit. Love is the highest attainment to which man can ascend. "If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us" (1 John 4:12; KJV). In Christ love is life, and life is love.**

That James had this in mind is evident from what he says in dealing with the problem of showing partiality toward those who are rich and influential. He describes the universal obligation of love as "the royal law," the king of all laws (James 2:8). This is the law from which all others derive their meaning and toward which all others are subservient. "If you really fulfil the royal law, according to the scripture, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself,' you do well. But if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors" (2:8, 9; RSV). Love for any neighbor precludes the showing of partiality. Partiality violates the fundamental law of social well-being as manifested in the life of Jesus.

There is another thing about the word "perfect" we should not overlook. It is a translation of *teleios*, **a word meaning "completion" or "perfection." In most cases it refers to perfection for a purpose or definite end. It was used for the attainment of the goal by a runner and his reception of the honorary wreath. It was used in the scholastic realm for one who had finished his course in the academy. Thus, James wrote a law combining all of the moral and ethical values Jesus taught and exemplified, and which were designed to make a man all that**

God intended for him to be.

No legal code can ever accomplish this. For man there must be an ideal so majestic that it will challenge him to transcend the fleshly and carnal life. As man identifies with that ideal he rises above the temptations that beset him and he becomes more than a conqueror. The revelation of God is a mirror reflecting the face and person of Jesus, making our shortcomings manifest by contrast.

The perfect law is one of liberty. This is interesting because law is a restraining and restricting force by its very nature. But the law of Christ, the governing principles of the Christ-life, frees one from debtorship to the flesh, from the slavery of passion and inordinate desire. It frees him to become his best as a son of God. But there is more to it than that, as will be seen by a study of the use of the same expression in James 2:8-13.

We must never forget that James was writing to Jews, who were familiar with the law as given by Moses. History portrays James himself as one who rigorously kept the law. The first part of the second chapter of his letter deals with the tendency to show preference toward the rich and affluent who visited the assembly of the saints. Such a practice might well be justified by a Jew who would say, "We were simply doing what the law enjoins in showing special consideration, for we were told to love our neighbor as ourselves."

To this James replies, "If you really fulfil the royal law, according to the scripture, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself,' you do well" (2:8). If that were the only motivation for showing politeness to visitors, there would be no distinction in the treatment of the rich and poor; but showing partiality is not obeying the law of God. It is a sin, and the one convicted of it is a transgressor. Remember that the Jews to whom James wrote had no New Testament Scriptures. When James talked about the "royal law according to the scriptures," he was quoting Leviticus

19:18.

To justify one's action by quoting one statement from the law while ignoring the remainder of it is to be guilty of inconsistency. The Jews had enumerated 613 commandments in the law. It was not conceivable to them that one could obey all of them. As a result they had developed the casuistic philosophy that one could total the commands he had kept during a certain period, and subtract the total of the ones he had specifically violated. If the result showed a favorable balance, he could feel justified. The rabbis taught that if one observed a command of the law, good was credited to him. His life would be prolonged and he would prosper in his inheritance. James insisted that what counts is one's attitude to the whole law, not the observance of an isolated commandment, which can then be quoted to gain credit.

The follower of Jesus is not under any written code enforced with police power or judicial authority. Therefore, writes James, "So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty" (2:12:RSV). We are not under statutory specifications, but in a spiritual relationship. We are to govern our speech and actions by the law of liberty, and this principle of behavior makes it possible for us to show mercy. Mercy is not required by one who lives perfectly, but by one who does not. It is the kind and compassionate treatment shown to an offender.

Law, as such, is interested in justice, not mercy. There is no justice in absolute mercy, and no mercy in absolute justice. One dies without mercy under the testimony of credible witnesses, when he is under a written code of authority. We operate under a law of liberty, and this provides for kindness or compassion. The one who shows no mercy will receive none. Our English word "mercy" is from the Latin *mercedis*, meaning payment, or reward. It refers to the heavenly reward to be given to the compassionate.

None of us will attain to glory except by the mercy of God. We simply cannot be saved upon the basis of our own righteousness. God will use the yardstick by which we measure others as the criterion for measuring us. If we show no mercy we will receive none. If we receive none we will be lost. The principle of liberty in Christ Jesus makes it possible for us to be compassionate. It distinguishes between love of law and the law of love.

The Commandments of Jesus

Contents

Many people have not yet grasped the greatness of a covenant inscribed by the Holy Spirit upon the chambers of the heart. It is difficult for them to see the difference between the requirements of a written legal code and the commandments voiced by Jesus. They reason that if a disciple of Jesus is obligated to keep His commandments, and if those commandments are now contained in the collection of documents called the New Testament Scriptures, those Scriptures must be a written code of laws or commandments.

In plain terms, this would mean that the law of Moses was a custodian to bring us to Christ, and that Christ has now placed us under another custodian. It should be a sufficient answer to this kind of rationalization to point out that it negates everything in the very apostolic letters, which are assumed to be the new written code. Nothing can be plainer than the statement of Paul, "But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a custodian" (Galatians 3:25; RSV).

Certainly the disciples of Jesus will keep the commandments of Jesus. This is the very essence of discipleship. But keeping His commandments is the response of love to Him as a person and not the observance of a code through fear of the consequences. A lawbreaker is subject to fear, but "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. We love him, because he first loved us" (1 John 4:18, 19; KJV).

Jesus did not come to place us under law but to reconcile us to God. He came that we might have life and have it more abundantly. He came to restore a relationship that had been shattered by sin and abrogated by alienation. Thus He said, "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John 14:23; KJV). There is no greater happiness than the recognition that one has the Father and the Son as his permanent guests.

Many people who read this would be flattered if the President of the United States chose to stay one night in their home. A far more tremendous honor comes to those who can live daily in the intimate companionship of the Creator of the universe and His only begotten Son. This transcendent experience does not begin with, nor result from, obedience to commands, as many people think. It begins with love for Jesus, and it is perpetuated and sustained by that love. Keeping the commandments of Jesus results from that love as a natural and effortless consequence. It is not conformity to a code, but the affectionate surrender to the embrace of a person in joyful recognition of acceptance.

One of the most outstanding declarations about the divine-human relationship which results from true discipleship occurs in John 15:9-15. Here Jesus is sharing His intimate thoughts with the apostles before His imminent torture and death. They were sorrowful in contemplation of the anticipated separation, but Jesus speaks of love, joy, and peace. He uses the terms "my love," "my joy," and "my peace," indicating that there was a quality about them that the world had not probed or understood. Indeed, He had said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you" (14:27; KJV). He then declared that the Father is glorified when the branches He has pruned produce fruit commensurate with the care bestowed upon them. This is how men prove they are disciples of Jesus Christ. Fruit cannot be borne by branches

detached from the vine, and the fruit is an indication that the branches are connected with and abiding in the vine. Abundance of fruit is proof of the response to the action of God upon the life. "Every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit" (15:2).

In direct connection with the statement relating to that productivity as a proof of discipleship, Jesus goes on to say, "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full" (vv. 9-11). Keeping the commandments is here placed in a framework of divine love and joy.

Jesus was loved, so He was able to love. His love for the disciples was a projection of the love manifested toward Him by the Father. His keeping of the Father's commandment was a demonstration of His response to the Father's love. The statement, "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall continue in my love" (v. 10), is not so much a conditional stipulation as it is an explanatory statement. Keeping the commandments is the way we exhibit love. The way Jesus manifested love for us is the way we are to manifest love for Jesus.

These guidelines and criteria were spoken, not to remind us of a law, but to remind us of the divine joy that results from union with Jesus. Joy is one of God's gifts to us. It is a fruit of the Spirit. What Jesus said about keeping His commandments was to guarantee that the delight and exultation that transcend sorrow and discouragement would remain with us and fill our cup of life with gladness and rejoicing.

Jesus continues with the statement, "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you" (v. 12). It is noteworthy that several times in the New Covenant

Scriptures a switch is made from "commandments" in the plural to "commandment" in the singular. Each time it is asserted that the commandment of Christ is to love one another. The fact that the degree of our love is measured by the love of Jesus for men makes it a new commandment. The love that sums up all other commandments is defined, not by a legalistic explanation, but by a divine attitude and action. The one who loves in this fashion fulfills the whole law; that is, he exhibits the state of righteousness for which law was designed and to which it could never attain.

This will not satisfy one who is convinced that keeping the law is the real goal of human existence and the only hope of pleasing God. To such a person love is only one tenet of a legal system; it is not the ultimate response of a broken and contrite spirit that reaches up to God to experience love and reaches down to the needy in order to share it. Everyone must make a choice between love of law and the law of love, and his choice will determine whether he will exist in bondage or live in liberty.

What difference can there be between a legal system and the commandments of Jesus? This question is always posed by those who would channel and confine the grace of God until they can control it. If one is obligated by his relationship to Jesus to keep His commandments, even though he is gathered up in love, he still must be under a code of laws. But there are great areas of difference between law-keeping and the response to grace in love. We shall mention only four such areas, and these have to do primarily with the attitudes engendered by consciousness of law.

1. All written codes of law must have a recognized interpreter. The interpretation of law by such a recognized authority becomes the official one, and it must be followed, whether the individual agrees with the assigned meaning or not. The Constitution of the United States of America is the foundation of our republic, but the interpretations placed upon

the provisions by the Supreme Court becomes the real law that the citizens must obey. In the two centuries since the Constitution was drafted, a great mass of material has been collected into books containing judgments, decisions, rulings, and precedents. The constitutional lawyer must consult the index for all of these in order to make an appeal or a case in court.

The Roman Catholic Church is a legalistic institution. It is a religio-politico power patterned after the Roman imperial system. At the head of this sprawling "empire" is a pope, a universal "father," whose *ex cathedra* pronouncements are deemed to be infallible. They must therefore be accepted without question as the official dogma of the members. All Protestant groups regarding the New Covenant Scriptures as a legal code have their own official interpreters, and these will differ from each other according to the authoritarian structure created by the various sects.

In religious parties that are congregational in form, a "presbytery," or eldership, may be vested with the power to decide upon the official interpretation. This becomes a dogma, and from this no appeal can be taken. The spirit of dogma is the same, whether administered by a universal pope or a local eldership. It differs in degree, but not in nature. It is inherent in any movement that regards itself as under law and not under grace, or which interprets grace in terms of law.

If we regard the "new covenant" as one in which God's laws are inscribed in our hearts and written in our minds, rather than compiled in a written code of jurisprudence, the individual conscience, enlightened by truth, becomes the supreme court. An institution does not have a mind. Although political, social, and religious movements operate in such a fashion as to try to produce a "mass mind" and "an organization man," this was never God's purpose. That idea runs counter to the divine design for our spiritual development. "Let every man be fully

persuaded in his own mind" (Romans 14:5) is an expression of Heaven's purpose. Each individual makes the response of love to God and man according to his ability at the time.

2. Every legalistic system must create an enforcement agency. Laws not enforced are worse than no laws at all. A society based upon constitutional law must develop a police power charged with the responsibility of keeping the citizenry in line and in subjection to the law. In the Roman Catholic Church, the hierarchy is the enforcement agency. The inventions of purgatory and the confessional booth make it possible for the parish priest to entertain pleas of guilt and to assess the various penalties for infractions of the moral code.

In other religious legal systems, conformity is secured by investing the clergy or presbytery with special powers of enforcement. Under threat of expulsion from the community for any expression of opinion contrary to the established dogmata, silence is secured by coercion. Dissidents are thus kept in check. All of this is contrary to the grace-faith covenant in which an individual's relationship with God is based upon receiving Jesus as the Lord of life and continuing to abide in Him.

3. Regarding the new covenant as a system of laws contained in a written code automatically assumes that anyone who does not meticulously comply with every specification is a lawbreaker. The religious establishment will treat such persons as criminals or felons. They will be dealt with summarily, lest they influence others to engage in similar "illegal" actions. There is no room for a brother who is honestly mistaken because "ignorance of the law excuses no one."

In legalistic communities, every person who questions the *status quo* **becomes a heretic or false teacher. Although the latter term is used only once in the New Covenant Scriptures, where it applies to one who denies the Lord who bought us, it is a general designation for those who disagree in modern sectarian**

parlance.

All of this is in contravention to our adoption into a divine family or household. In this concept, the children do not reach a common level of understanding at a given time, but continue in various stages of mental growth and achievement. Those who do not fully grasp the Father's will, or who are unable to freely carry it out, are not lawbreakers. There are those who are weak in the faith, but they still are to be received (Romans 14:1). There are members of the body deemed less honorable, but upon these we bestow the more abundant honor (1 Corinthians 12:23). All of us are to walk according to our present spiritual attainment (Philippians 3:16), even as we seek to grow in grace and in knowledge of the truth.

Involuntary ignorance is not a sin, although voluntary ignorance, which is a deliberate refusal to learn, is always a sin. We can keep the commandments only as we become aware of and apprehend them. To obey them as a response to the person of Jesus provides for our loving even while we are learning. It is our love and not our degree of knowledge that makes us worthy to be received. "If anyone fancies that he knows, he knows nothing yet, in the true sense of knowing. But if a man loves, he is acknowledged by God" (1 Corinthians 8:3; NEB). We are forbidden to judge a brother upon one hand or to hold him in contempt upon the other. "Each of us must consider his neighbour and think what is for his good and will build up the common life" (Romans 15:2; NEB).

4. Another characteristic of a legalistic system is to create a feeling of insecurity and doubt as to one's standing with God. No one can ever be sure at a given time that he knows as much of the law as he ought to know in order to be saved. No one knows that his obedience to what he does know is sufficient for his justification.

The keeping of the commandments as a response *of* love

and a response *to* love places the emphasis upon love rather than upon the commandments. One does not love Christ because he keeps the commandments, but he keeps the commandments because he loves Christ. He does not keep the commandments in order to be received, but because he has been received he keeps the commandments.

There is always an element of fear connected with law, but perfect love casts out fear: "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love" (1 John 4:16-18; KJV).

We have the assurance that God loves us. He proved it by sending His Son to be the atonement for our sins. We know that even death cannot be triumphant over us. God will give us victory over the last enemy through our Lord Jesus Christ. Even now we can cast our cares, concerns, and worries upon Him, because He cares for us. He has promised that He will never leave or forsake us. We are not foster children delivered to God's house by law. We are sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. He is our Father and we are His children.

We study the New Covenant Scriptures, not to prepare ourselves as lawyers, but to know better how to express love for God and our neighbors. We regard the love letters of the apostles as did those to whom they were originally written. We read them as letters from dear friends and not as a compendium of laws sent from a bureau of statutory requirements. Even those letters dealing with thorny problems use the word "brothers" repeatedly. The apostles were not writing to brothers-in-law, but to brothers in love.

There are warm and intimate communications that close

with such words as "My love be with you all in Christ Jesus" (1 Corinthians 16:24; KJV). Why should we take these and convert them into cold, legalistic documents, thus building up walls of hostility between us? Did the saints in Philippi, who were addressed by Paul as "my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown" (4:1), subject the letter they received to laws of interpretation and hermeneutics, or did they read it with tears of gladness coursing down their cheeks? Did those to whom John wrote as "my little children" regard his letter as a legal document to be debated as in a tribunal, or as a letter to be read in the family?

When Paul learned from Chloe and her family of the crisis faced by the congregation at Corinth, should he have written, "Whereas an emergency exists for the immediate taking effect of this act, the same shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage"? As it was he wrote, "I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you" (1 Corinthians 4:14; KJV). He declared that Timothy and he had no "dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand" (2 Corinthians 1:24). Why can we not regard these wonderful letters as a help and encouragement to our joy, rather than as documents written to exercise dominion over our faith?

"When you seek to be justified by way of law, your relation with Christ is completely severed: you have fallen out of the domain of God's grace. For to us, our hope of attaining that righteousness which we eagerly await is the work of the Spirit through faith. If we are in union with Christ Jesus, circumcision makes no difference at all, nor does the want of it; the only thing that counts is faith active in love" (Galatians 5:4-6; NEB).

Summary and Conclusion

Contents

Perhaps it will help us all to put into condensed form what was presented in the previous chapters. We can thus re-examine the points of emphasis and determine if they have validity in the light of God's revelation. Although no one likes to regiment thinking, in this instance it may be of some assistance to number the pertinent points for the purpose of studying them in more orderly fashion.

1. In His association with mankind, God has revealed himself as a covenant-making personality. He said to Noah and his sons, "I will establish my covenant with you" (Genesis 9:11; KJV). He said to Abraham, "I will make my covenant between me and thee" (Genesis 17:2). This means that God exhibited a willingness to enter into an agreement with men. He was willing to bind himself to perform certain things, based upon the immutability inherent in a divine promise and upon the integrity involved in His character and name.

Because of these things, our relationship to God must be a covenantal relationship. The nature of that relationship will be regulated by the covenant that creates it. In every case the covenant people will differ from those who are not under the covenant. They will be a special people because God has entered into a special agreement, the terms of which set them apart from other people.

2. There are two covenants in history that are of

significance because of their relationship to Christ. The first of these two covenants was made with the twelve tribes of Israel, and it constituted them into a nation. That nation was to keep alive the concept of monotheism until Christ could be manifested in the flesh as the Son of God. This first covenant consisted of Ten Commandments, which were written on two tablets of stone. It was delivered to Moses on Mount Sinai and became the constitution of a nation composed of "the people of God."

The covenant inaugurated a legalistic regime, and was supplemented by laws, statutes, judgments, and commandments, all of which were compiled in a book. The book was sprinkled with the blood of a sacrifice and designated "the book of the covenant" (Exodus 24:7). In spite of severe penalties for violating this written code the people refused to be guided by its provisions. Finally, God announced that He would make a new covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-33). Unlike the one made when Israel was freed from Egypt, the laws and requirements of the new relationship were not to be recorded externally, but were to be internally inscribed and written on the hearts of men (v. 33).

The covenant made at Mount Horeb, or Sinai, was designated the "first covenant" (Hebrews 8:7) and the "old covenant" (Hebrews 8:13). The "new covenant," which created a personal rather than a national relationship with God, was declared to be "a better covenant, which was established upon better promises" (8:6). The apostle Paul introduces an interesting allegory, in which the covenants are likened to Hagar and Sarah, both of whom bore children to Abraham. The allegory points up the truth that those under the "first covenant" were in legal bondage, but those under the "new covenant" are free (Galatians 4:21-31). Regarding the law as a yoke of slavery, he encourages those under the new covenant to "stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Galatians 5:1; KJV).

The purpose of the legalistic covenant was to keep God's people under surveillance and strict control in order to bring them to Christ. The coming of Christ was designed to bring man into a completely new relationship with God, a relationship of faith. The type of relationship that was instituted through Moses stands in stark contrast to that which came through Christ. "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17; KJV).

There is as much difference between the relationship that was previously enforced and that which we now enjoy with God, as there is between a legal code and undeserved kindness. All law is a restraining and restrictive influence. Law is intended to define boundaries, to restrict liberties, and to provide penalties. Under law man is really under guard. So the apostle writes, "But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed" (Galatians 3:23; KJV). In this rendering by the *King James Version* the words "kept" and "shut up" are significant. The first is a term meaning to be under guard; the second is used of those who are confined in a stockade or prison.

In the next verse, the law is defined as a "child-conductor" or "custodian" (in the *Revised Standard Version*). The ultimate purpose was to deliver God's people to Christ. In Christ a custodian is no longer needed. Here we are kept by the love of God and are sharers in a life that no law could ever give (3:21). The glorious covenantal relationship now sustained is not based upon a written code at all. We ourselves become the letter of Christ. The new covenant is not written with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God. It is not written on tablets of stone or other external material but upon the tablets of the heart (2 Corinthians 3:3). The new covenant is not one of a written code, but of the Spirit.

There are but two approaches to justification, or righteousness, that is made available to man. Justification is a

state of guiltlessness in the presence of God. It is regarded as righteousness because it restores a right relationship with the Father, a relationship that had been broken up by sin and transgression. Justification is available upon either of two conditions: law or faith. There is no other ground for hope.

While justification is available on these two bases, it is impossible to attain by law because of man's weakness in the flesh. Justification by law demands perfect conformity with law. Whatever law man regards as the basis of justification must be meticulously obeyed. The least infraction or deviation ends all hope of justification and spells disaster. The very principle of attempted justification by law is that one lives only as long as he does exactly what the law demands. "The man which doeth these things shall live by them" (Romans 10:5; KJV). Law as a means of life becomes away of death.

3. After fifteen centuries of dealing with man in a legalistic covenantal arrangement, God sent His Son into the world. He was sent to condemn sin in the flesh and to institute a new and living way under which man would be justified by faith. This Jesus accomplished through His own sacrifice on Calvary. It is the atoning blood of Jesus that makes possible the forgiveness of our sins, and removes the guilt and stain of sin under which we would otherwise rest. The faith that justifies is not faith in a system, a ritual, or a code. Faith involves trust, and the faith that justifies and restores the right relationship with God is absolute trust in Jesus' atonement. Every person has sinned and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). No one can be justified in God's sight by deeds of law. Justification upon the basis of human law-keeping is an impossibility. Law produces knowledge of sin, but cannot produce a sense of righteousness. Therefore the righteousness of God is not based upon legal conformity.

Accordingly, the righteousness of God has been made known as available to man on other terms. It is "the

righteousness of God which is by faith" (Romans 3:22). Under it we are "justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (3:24). To be justified is to be guiltless. None of us can attain to this state. All are guilty before God. But under the new covenant of grace, which reaches its apex in the atonement by the blood of Christ, God declares us guiltless. His declaration is made, not upon the basis of our deeds, but upon the ground of the sacrifice made for us by His Son who bore our guilt upon the cross.

Righteousness is not a state that we strive to attain by the laborious and self-defeating method of acquiring knowledge and implementing it by human effort. It is by divine declaration as a manifestation of marvelous grace and mercy. When one ceases to trust in his own righteousness, trusting absolutely and without reservation in "that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith" (Philippians 3:9), his faith is counted to him for righteousness. He is justified by faith, declared guiltless by the Father, and treated thus.

4. Galatians 3:22 reveals the fact that the Scripture "concluded all under sin." "All" includes the whole world, those who had the law of God and those who were without law. Everyone was in the same lost state, so that all could equally qualify for the right relationship God had conditioned upon trust in the righteousness of faith in Christ Jesus. The law was simply a custodian to bring those under its care to Jesus who is the justifier of all. With the coming of faith in Christ as the basis of righteousness, law was terminated as a system of seeking justification. "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Romans 10:4; KJV).

This means that our acceptance of the good news of the grace of God is not upon the basis of obedience to law. It is not by meritorious works performed in a kind of barter system. We do not trade our effort for a reward. We do not deposit our good deeds in a heavenly vending machine and await the desired

result to come tumbling down. Paul tells us, "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Galatians 3:26, 27; KJV). Faith is not a work demanded by law, for if it were we would still be under a custodian. Baptism is not an act of law. It is simply faith activated. It is demonstrated and manifested in the only way that vital faith in Christ can be shown: by loving response to His example and will.

Here we have a great contrast between human reactions under the two divergent covenants of law and grace. We are conditioned in our social culture to a world of "law and order." The latter (grace) is seemingly dependent upon the former (law). Therefore, many sincere disciples of Christ are afraid to even think of our not being under a written code. To them it means that everyone must make the choice between law or lawlessness. But there is no spirit of lawlessness in Christ. Here the contrast is between law and love. There can be no anarchy in Christ Jesus for the simple reason that all of His subjects have surrendered their will to His, and He is Lord of all!

The very Scriptures that some would like to regard as law specifically declare, "The law is not made for the righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane,..." (1 Timothy 1:9). In Christ Jesus we are made partakers of the divine nature. We are in the world but not of it. We no longer walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. We are not under condemnation. We have been set free from the law of sin and death.

Our obedience is not to a written code but to a loving Savior. His commandments do not constitute "laying down the law" for us, but a lifting up to love. Our compliance is not conformity to a code but the response of love to a person. He said, "If a man love me, he will keep my words" (John 14:23). It is just that simple. I repent because I love Him. I confess my sins because I love Him. I ask forgiveness because I love Him. I do

not want to hurt Him, I want to be close to Him. I want to be His, and I want Him to be mine. Our relationship would not be enhanced by law, but destroyed by it.

This brings us to the most difficult part in sharing my concept of our relationship with God created by the new covenant. It is that of my own experience. Most of us are aware of the fact that it is easier to deal with such a theme academically than to lay bare the inmost feelings of one's own heart. For years I struggled to please God on the basis of conformity to a written code. I regarded the apostolic letters as a compilation of judgments, statutes, and judicial requirements. I felt that these demanded perfect obedience under threat of eternal condemnation.

Since I had been taught that we were under "the new law," I began with that presupposition, and everything that was written I interpreted within that frame of reference. Accordingly, grace became merely another vehicle through which law was conveyed. Faith was to be used as the grappling-hook by which one scaled the steep side of the mountain as he agonized upward toward God. Present always within one who takes this mental route is the sense of his own failure. He is not righteous by his own makeshift criterion, and he knows that he is not.

In order to live with oneself under such a system it is necessary to engage in casuistry, and this amounts to self-deception. The person selects some items with which he can relate and invests them with an aura of importance, which really belongs to the total relationship. By emphasizing these and maintaining a degree of loyalty in their defense, he flatters himself that he is faithful to God. What this does, of course, is to lead him into a frightful state of self-righteousness. He becomes a worshiper of his own mental and moral powers, and demonstrates his insecurity by aggressive assaults upon others.

I have been delivered from the fears, inhibitions, and hostilities, which seem to be the natural result of confinement. I am free to examine the marvelous revelation of God in a new and open way. I marvel at the fact that God, sinless and perfect, was willing to enter into a covenant with me, as sinful and imperfect as I am. I rejoice in it, even though I can neither fully comprehend or explain it. The divine agreement by which I became a son of God is written in my heart by the Holy Spirit. My own heart is an "ark of the covenant." It is here God dwells through the divine Comforter or Helper.

I read the New Covenant Scriptures now with the eyes of my understanding being enlightened. They are more precious to me and I have a deeper sense of hunger for their content. I regard the letters of the envoys for what they are: letters of love written to those caught up in the human predicament. They were written to assure those people that they have eternal life. They are letters of correction, admonition, and exhortation. They were never intended to develop legal or technical specialists, but lovers of God and men. They speak to me with new depth and power.

I look at life with a new sense of its meaning, since I realize that eternal life was embodied in Christ Jesus, and through Him we share in that wonderful transcendent dimension of existence. He has put all history into proper focus for me, including the agony as well as the ecstasy. Eternal life is to know God and His Son, to experience a creative relationship with them, which, even though it entails suffering here, will result in glory.

I face death as the "great adventure," the final transforming and transferring event, the gateway to eternal rest, the door to peace in its ultimate. Hope becomes a greater comfort when one realizes that it never disappoints because the love of God is poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Perfect love casts out fear, and that includes the fear of death.

When I came to accept the reality of the indwelling Spirit as God's immeasurable gift to us during the absence of His Son, the significance of the covenant of grace, as opposed to a legalistic contract such as was given by Moses, became immediately apparent. I was no longer lonely. I never felt forsaken. I could rejoice in the face of calamity and triumph over adversity. My prayers became more intimate, my concern for others grew deeper.

The fact is that God has accepted and received me as I am, and I do not have to struggle for recognition. This truth has stifled any sense of rivalry with others. We do not need to compete for the favor of the Father. There is room for all of us under the umbrella of divine affection. All who have entered the family through faith are brothers and sisters. I am free to be as merciful toward them as God has been toward me. Each must be allowed to stand or fall to his own Master. Each must be fully persuaded in his own mind.

It is a blessing beyond compare to realize that we are "dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:11). We are dead and our lives are hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory. (See Colossians 3:3, 4). No wonder it is written, "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (1 John 3:3). It is all summed up for me in one glowing statement, as it appears in the *Revised Standard Version***: "For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace" (Romans 6:14). Praise God!**

THE TWISTED SCRIPTURES

by W. Carl Ketcherside

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Foreword by Leroy Garrett

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A book with such an odd title as "The Twisted Scriptures" may need an explanation, for no faithful Christian, including the author of this book, believes that "Twisted" is one of the characteristics of the holy Scriptures. The author is referring to the way some people treat the Bible. They do not use it as much as they abuse it. The author likened the way some people wrest the Scriptures to a sign in front of a machine shop that read, "All manner of twisting and warping done here." The author is saying that this is what too often happens to the Bible in pulpits and classrooms across the land.

That holy Scripture would be twisted and warped like a rod of iron in a smelting shop is bad enough, but when it is done to defend and perpetuate division among believers the evil is compounded. That is what this book is about. It lays bare not only "the horrid evil" that schism among Christians is, to quote an angry Thomas Campbell when he wrote of being "sick and tired" of partyism, but it exposes the sectarian spirit that seeks to enlist the Bible itself in support of dividing the Body of Christ over the opinions and doctrines of men.

This means that this book is really about hermeneutics or Biblical interpretation. Beginning in the late 1980's there has been more concern among Churches of Christ/Christian Churches about the way the Bible has been interpreted. A call for "A New Hermeneutics" has made its way into some of the more seminal books, especially by our younger scholars, as well

as in workshops, lectureships, and the papers. The material in this book, originally written in 1965, anticipated this concern by more than two decades in that it recognizes that many of our problems, including a fractured Restoration Movement, are related to the way we have interpreted (or misinterpreted) the Bible, particularly the New Testament.

This book, however, is not a call for a new hermeneutics as much as it is a plea for a reasonable and responsible handling of Scripture that goes back to the best minds of our heritage. It is evident that the author would not insist upon a new hermeneutics, but would settle for the "Rules of Interpretation" laid down by Alexander Campbell, which do not allow the Bible to be warped and twisted for the sake of either party politics or party doctrines.

Carl Ketcherside would not mind being called a "Campbellite" insofar as Biblical interpretation is concerned. One only needs to read Campbell's seven rules to see that our people by and large have either been ignorant of such rules or have neglected them. They are the only hermeneutics we need, old or new. If we but heeded the wisdom of Campbell's Rule 1 it would go far in "untwisting" some of our handiwork. It reads: "On opening any book in the sacred Scriptures, consider first the historical circumstances of the book. These are the order, the title, the author, the date, the place and the occasion of it."

Campbell goes on in Rule 3 to lay down a hermeneutical principle that is as needed in our day as much as it was revolutionary in his: "The same laws of interpretation which are applied to the language of other books are to be applied to the language of the Bible." That is, the way we interpret a letter from a friend is the way we should interpret one of Paul's letters. Or the way we study European history is not all that different from the way we study Biblical history. Campbell was uneasy with subjective, mystical, allegorical, and existential approaches to the Bible. In this study Ketcherside follows in the

tradition of Alexander Campbell.

Campbell's Rule 7, which he called "indispensable," is especially evident in Ketcherside's approach to the Bible. Campbell was far in advance of his day when he formulated this incisive hermeneutical rule: "We must come within the understanding distance." He is saying that we must have the heart as well as the mind to understand. We must want to understand what the Bible says. If we are "within understanding distance" we will not manipulate Scripture to make it mean what we want it to mean. And we may have to distinguish between what it meant (then) and what it means (now). The heart and conscience must be arbiters as well as logic, rules, and principles.

This approach to Scripture is evident now and again in Ketcherside's writings, causing him to formulate what might be seen as new rules. These lines from his publication Mission Messenger (1965, p. 177) are an example:

> **These sacred scriptures, like any other communication between rational beings, are subject to interpretation and application by those who read them, and one criterion of accuracy in both areas is whether our view formulated by study is conducive to the reduction or increase of tensions among the disciples of Christ.**

Notice how closely he follows Campbell's hermeneutics. The Bible is to be interpreted "like any other communication between rational beings." And how can one test his accuracy in interpretation? If said interpretation aggravates dissension between brethren and causes further division and does nothing to ease tensions, then it is suspect. That is because we are standing beyond understanding distance. We are not interpreting the Bible in a way that is consistent with the purposes of the Bible, which is to promote peace and brotherhood. If it satisfies the mind, it neglects the heart. Any interpretation that is in conflict with the Spirit of Christ must be

rejected, however "logical" it may be otherwise.

This book is liberating in that it helps one to be a Christ-person rather than a party-person. It is rooted in the grace of God and the Spirit of Christ. It names sectarianism for what it is, a sin against God, and how shameful it is to use God's word to foster factionalism. It encourages one to turn away from the wooden and lifeless use of a few select proof-texts, which are themselves warped and twisted so as to fit some party line, to that view of the Scriptures that our Lord spoke of when he said, "They testify of me" (Jn. 5:39). This book shows us that there is a big difference between seeing our party in the Bible and seeing Jesus in the Bible.

Carl Ketcherside could finally write such a book as this only because he too was liberated from the party spirit. He was once a "wing commander," to use his term, of a little sect within the Restoration Movement. He was "on call" to debate those issues that were unique to his party. He had a narrow, sectarian view of unity and fellowship. The change came when he was alone one wintry night in a little Church of Christ building in Belfast, Ireland. Long weary of sectarian strife, he turned to the promise in Rev. 3:20, and for the first time in his life actually invited Jesus into his heart.

From that night on he embarked upon what he called his "Pilgrimage of Joy" which led him to become, as he put it, "a peacemaker instead of a piecemaker." He committed the second half of his life to restoring peace, unity, and love between people long separated by the scourge of schism. Multiplied thousands whose lives he touched through his long years as an editor and lecturer are thankful for what happened that night in Belfast 40 years ago. As he himself put it, when Christ enters sectarianism has to leave.

Out of that experience he often summarized his plea with two affirmations. The first was that we have no right to make

anything a condition of fellowship that God does not make a condition for being saved. The second was that wherever God has a child we have a brother or sister.

The following lines from the first chapter of this book are not only vintage Ketcherside, but they also reveal the spirit of the man. They also underscore what responsible hermeneutics is all about, new or old:

> **It is ridiculous to quote the scriptures to justify factionalism when they were given to forbid it. No honest opinion, no sincerely held doctrinal view, can ever be made the ground for rejection of one of God's children. It would be absurd for God to warn that the party spirit would debar from inheritance of the kingdom, and then make provision for the party spirit and enjoin it upon us.**
>
> **— Leroy Garrett**

THE TWISTED SCRIPTURES

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Preface

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A number of years ago, during an extended period of labor in Belfast, North Ireland, I regularly visited some of the many bookstalls in the city which displayed used volumes. While almost casually browsing one day, I spied a book of which I had frequently heard but had never seen. It was titled Union, or, The Divided Church Made One. The author was John Harris, and the original purchaser had inscribed his name and the date of purchase on the flyleaf. The date was March 5, 1867. I purchased the book for a shilling, which was then valued at twelve cents in our coinage.

It was a rare find and I read the book through that night, underlining statements which impressed me with their truth and factuality. I have since read the volume twice more and it is now quite marked up. One quotation I wish to share with you is found on page 21, where the author is writing about the cross of Jesus.

> **His cross, like the ark in the wilderness, is the center around which his people are to encamp; so that they cannot separate into factions, or withdraw from each other, without retiring at the same time from the presence of the cross.**

As you read my own book you will be constantly aware that this is the point I am trying to make. Our relationship with the Father of mercies is created and maintained through faith in

Jesus as the Son of God. It was the cross which established beyond doubt how far God was willing to go to end alienation and pride and reconcile us unto Himself. And it is the cross which makes possible that marvelous sharing of eternal life which is called "the fellowship" in our English versions of the divine revelation.

Fellowship is not conditioned upon orthodoxy of opinion, uniformity in knowledge, or conformity in thought. The only unity possible to thinking men and women is unity in diversity. Conformity is possible only for robots or mechanical men, although slaves in their hopeless servility may approach unto it. Free men can be one only in Christ, and the deeper they go in their relationship to Him, the closer will be their relationship to one another.

To justify division in the family of God, which is never once sanctioned by the holy scriptures, those scriptures must be wrested, twisted and distorted. It has been my intention to honestly and humbly investigate some of the passages which have been cruelly misapplied and return them to their proper context where they will encourage us to produce "the peaceable fruits of righteousness" rather than the bitter and depressing harvest of heartache and sorrow which has been our lot for so long.

Much of what is said will be universally applicable to believers in Christ, regardless of the names on the signboards behind which they meet. But the perceptive reader will soon recognize that I have addressed my remarks primarily to conditions existing in a certain segment of a historical restoration attempt, listed in the United States Census Bureau of Religious Statistics under the denomination *Church of Christ.* **The movement of which this is one of the branches was launched as "a project to unite the Christians in all of the sects." That it is now the most divided movement on the contemporary scene is not so much due to an abandonment of the scriptures as to the**

twisting of them to perpetuate "a System" which is confused with and substituted for the reconciling community purchased by the blood of Jesus.

— W. Carl Ketcherside

The Twisted Scriptures

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"The right to be wrong in matters of religious belief must be accorded, otherwise we produce hypocrites instead of persons with an enlightened belief that is fully their own. If the truth be might and God all-powerful, His children need not fear that disaster will follow freedom of thought." **— Francois De Fenelon, Archbishop of Cambrai.**

One of the most interesting letters in that treasure chest which is popularly referred to as the New Testament, is the one designated as 2 Peter. Written by the impetuous fisherman who was called from his occupation by Jesus, the letter is robust and challenging, filled with stirring thoughts and emphatic language. It is from this depository of revelation that I have chosen the statement which will form the theme of this little volume and provide its title.

Near the close of his communication the apostle urges his readers to exert every effort to be found at peace with God and to remain unblemished and above reproach in his sight. He reminds them that God's patience exercised in our behalf will result in our salvation, and mentions that Paul also endorsed this thought when he wrote to the same people.

> **Bear in mind that our Lord's patience with us is our salvation, as our beloved brother Paul wrote to you, out of the wisdom he had received, speaking of this matter as he does in all of his letters, some of which contain certain**

difficult and obscure statements, which those who are untaught and unstable, distort as they do the other scriptures, to their own destruction (2 Peter 3 :15,16).

There is no message, divine or human, which is proof against distortion by men who are ignorant or unscrupulous. But while such wresting of a communication given by men may not evoke consequences of a serious nature, destruction may result from misinterpreting or misapplying God's revelation. In this volume I am going to concern myself with the use of scripture to divide and fragment the family of God, and to excuse and justify the very schism which the Word deplores and condemns. But first let us look at the rendering of our passage in two other versions.

As indeed our beloved brother Paul has written to you, out of the wisdom vouchsafed to him, speaking of this as he has done in all his letters— letters containing some knotty points, which ignorant and unsteady souls twist (as they do the rest of the scriptures) to their own destruction. (Moffatt)

Our beloved brother, Paul, from the wisdom that God gave him, also wrote to you about this. In his letter to you, as in all his letters, he speaks of these things. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, that is true, and there are people lacking knowledge and steadfastness who twist his words to their own destruction, just as they do the rest of the Scriptures. (*The Simplified New Testament— Norlie).*

The scriptures can be twisted, distorted and slanted. When this happens they may be used to undo the very purpose of God who gave them. When the written word is so wrested as to defeat the purpose, plan and prayer of the Living Word, something is indeed seriously wrong.

I do not think that we must infer from the statement of Peter that every person who wrests a scripture from its context

is wilfully ignorant or purposely unsteady. No doubt men can do this while innocent of any evil motive and with a firm persuasion that their application is the will of God. If they are ignorant, it is involuntary, and not deliberate. Such men, when shown a more excellent way, will at once amend their thinking. It is because of my firm conviction that the good and honest heart will receive the seed of the Word, and not reject it, that I address myself to those of my brethren who are shivering the kingdom of heaven into fragments under the delusion that by so doing they best serve the interests of our King.

Ignoring the Context

Perhaps it would be well for us to contemplate some of the ways in which the scriptures may be twisted. Immediately, most of us will think of the practice of lifting a passage out of its context or setting, and interpreting it in isolation and detachment. This is always a malpractice, but it is even more grievous when the purpose is to justify or defend a presupposition or arbitrary position.

Our word "text" is from the Latin *textus*, to construct or weave. It is found in such words as textile and texture. It is related to technical, which was originally applied to the art or skill of constructing or weaving. Thus context refers to the discourse or writing produced by the weaving together of words in language, and specifically to "the part or parts of a written or spoken passage preceding or following a particular word or group of words, and so intimately associated with them as to throw light upon their meaning."

The sacred scriptures occur in three contexts— time, place and revelation. If properly understood, they must be studied in the light of all of these. The word of God was not delivered neatly packaged and tied with a ribbon. It was the divine response to human situation. It did not create needs and then

proceed to meet them, but circumstances existed and the will of heaven was revealed to relate to them. We are obligated to determine as nearly as we can the situation which gave rise to the revelation, and study it in the light of the circumstances.

As we prosecute our search for meaning it will become evident that strife and division have actually been promoted by ignoring the immediate purpose for which a thing was written. In anticipation, let me refer to 2 John 9, 10, where the aged apostle warned.

> **If any man come and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed, for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.**

Factional proponents have made the term "this doctrine" refer to every traditional teaching around which a party has rallied. We shall learn that John was writing to combat Gnosticism, one of the most dangerous philosophies to threaten the Way in all of its history. It was an attack upon the very foundation of the faith. To apply a statement designed to preserve and protect the faith against an invidious doctrine which would cut the very heart out of it, to every minor divergent view and opinion, is as absurd as directing cobalt rays intended to check the spread of grave malignancy against every pimple or welt induced by a bee sting.

When we study Amos 3:3, where the King James Version has the prophet asking, "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" we will see how failure to consider the immediate and remote context has trapped men into taking a position which would make all fellowship impossible and cooperation a futile gesture. It will also become apparent that any contention which must depend for its validity upon the rendering of a single and specific translation, and which is not sustained by other versions, must always be under suspicion.

Altering the Vocabulary

Another way by which the scriptures can be twisted is by assigning an acquired meaning to a word and then proceeding as if this was the meaning accredited to it when used by the Spirit. In order to communicate the divine will to mankind in understandable fashion, God employed the method used by men in communicating with one another. And the highest form of such communication is through language.

This may appear in oral or written form. In spoken form language makes use of certain sounds, and to these, singularly or in combination, assigned and understandable values are attached, so that concepts or images may be transferred from one mind to another. In written form, certain characters are used for the various sounds and the eye serves to flash the message to the brain as the ear does in audible discourse.

Words are not ideas. At best they are symbols of ideas. Simple people require but few words and all of these originally have a confined or limited usage. But as those who use them develop new skills and multiply their relationships to the world around them their words take on new connotations. Words are like those who use them, they acquire new breadth and significance. The currency of thought is like the coin of the realm. It becomes polished through usage in the marketplace. Sometimes it is a difficult thing to determine the value of a coin which has passed through many hands. And the same thing holds true with words.

The revelation of God through the Spirit was given some two thousand years ago, in a land foreign to this and in a tongue alien to the one with which I am conversant. It was first announced by a voice and then written down. But since the time when the envoys of Christ lived and spoke, their words have been subjected to all of the changing fortunes of history. Too, they have been submitted to the shock of translation, in which

the ideas they sought to convey have been fitted into new outer garments, some of which were borrowed and others tailored for the occasion.

The result is that many of the words we read in our translations of the scriptures no longer convey to the popular mind the ideas with which they were originally invested. It is not an exaggeration to say that almost every word in the English versions of the Bible has been hammered and pummeled by theological and ecclesiastical usage until it no longer communicates the will of God as at the beginning.

It is not our purpose here to deal at length with this phase of distortion, but a few examples may serve to illustrate the point I wish to make. Take, for instance, the word "minister." As used in the sacred scriptures it meant "servant" and any service rendered to the community of saints or its members was recognized as ministry. In our day the term has taken on a specialized and professional meaning, and a majority of the saints would disclaim that they were ministers. They use the word rather as a title to be bestowed upon a certain class of functionaries. This caused Alexander Campbell to write:

> **But in this appropriation of the title,** *the ministers of Christ,* **there is a variety of error, and of arrogance. The term** *diakonos***,in Greek;** *minister***, in Latin; and** *servant***, in English, are expressive of the same character or standing, are titles of the same import. The term** *minister***, a general or unappropriated title, designates any servant, and belongs to every obedient disciple of Jesus Christ. In the general sense of the term, it belongs to sister Phoebe, as well as to any apostle or bishop. And indeed, the widow who cast in her two mites, was a much greater minister or servant of God, than any of the Westminster clergy, who were servants of God and the long parliament. To call the clergy the ministers of Christ, is, therefore, a pious robbery of the obedient disciples of Christ, who are ministers of God as well as they, to speak in the most**

humble terms. (*The Christian Baptist*, 2, page 193).

Or, consider the word "sanctuary," which comes from *sanctus*, holy, and is used to designate a holy place. Professed followers of Jesus often use it to label the place for the general gathering of the saints to engage in corporate expressions of praise, as opposed to Sunday School rooms, educational wings, or social halls. This demonstrates a kind of ignorance wholly unbecoming to those who aspire to be "a guide of the blind, and a light of them which are in darkness."

Jesus came to do away with such distinctions, and with a concept of worship dependent upon being within a "sacred confine," marked out by ceremony and dedicatory exercises. All such belonged to the adolescent age of Judaism, and had no place at all in the life of mature sons of God. In Christ there are no holy places, no holy days, and no holy things. There are only holy people. The Most High does not dwell in temples made by the hands of men. He is not worshiped with men's hands as though he needed anything. The only sanctuary God has upon earth today is the consecrated heart of the follower of Jesus. This is the temple of God. It is the place where he dwells through the Spirit.

Now all of this is taken lightly by many in our day. Even in the seminaries where men seek to prepare themselves to instruct less enlightened followers in the will of God, it is tossed aside as of no particular consequence. It becomes a matter for levity and is made the butt of jokes. And the result is, that those who claim to teach the revealed will of God actually perpetuate the errors of the past and ignorantly pass them on to another generation to become a part of an unwarranted tradition, further obscuring the truth of heaven.

Although I feel very deeply about this matter, and am thoroughly convinced that we will never accomplish the will of God on earth until we recapture and restore the vocabulary of

the Holy Spirit, I am going to allow another to say what I feel needs to be said. I am reluctant to present this lengthy quotation, for experience has taught me that we have produced many superficial readers and shallow thinkers in our day. There is a tendency to skip over quotations as a dragonfly skims over a body of water, scarcely getting the gossamer wings wet. In this instance, however, I implore my readers to give consideration to every sentence of the following rather lengthy statement. I have chosen to share with you these words of Alexander Campbell because they express my sentiments far more forcibly than I could enunciate them in my own words.

> **There must be, and there shall be an abandonment of the new and corrupt nomenclature, and a restoration of the inspired one. In other words there must be an abandonment of the Babylonish or corrupt phraseology of the dark ages and of modern discoveries, in the fixed style of the Christian vocabulary. This is a matter of greater importance than may, at first sight, appear to all. Words and names long consecrated, and sanctified by long prescription, have a very imposing influence upon the human understanding. We think as well as speak by means of words. It is just as impossible for an adult to think as to speak without words. Let him that doubts make the experiment.**
>
> **Now as all correct ideas of God and things invisible are supernatural ideas, no other terms can so suitably express them as the terms adopted by the Holy Spirit, in adapting those supernatural truths to our apprehension. He that taught man to speak, would doubtless adopt the most suitable terms in his language to reveal himself to his understanding. To disparage those terms, by adopting others in preference, is presumptuous and insolent on the part of man. Besides when men adopt terms to express supernatural truths, it is not the truths themselves, but their ideas of them they communicate. They select such terms as suit their apprehensions of revealed truth, and hence the terms they use are expressive only of their**

conceptions of divine things and must just be as imperfect as their conceptions are. It is impossible for any man, unless by accident, to express accurately that which he apprehends imperfectly.

From this source spring most of our *doctrinal* controversies. Men's opinions, expressed in their own terms, are often called Bible truths. In order then to a full restoration of the ancient order of things there must "a pure speech" restored. And I think the Lord once said, in order to a restoration, that he would restore to the people "a pure speech." We know that the ancient order of things amongst the Jews, could not be restored, after their captivity in Babylon, until the law of the Lord, containing the primitive institutions of the Jews' religion, was read and understood by the people, and the dialect of Babylon abandoned as far as it corrupted the primitive simplicity of that religion. Hence the scribes read them the law from morning to evening, gave them the sense and made them understand the reading. This became necessary because of the corrupt dialect they had learned in Babylon, on account of which their religion was unintelligible to them until the language of Canaan was purged from the phraseology of Ashdod. It will, we apprehend, be found precisely similar in the antitype, or in the return of the people of God from the captivity of Babylon the great, the mother of abominations" (*The Christian Baptist*, Volume 2, pages 222, 223).

Disrespect for Authority

The problem with which we are dealing arises from lack of respect for the authority of the sacred scriptures. Nothing is clearer than the fact that we are enjoined by the written word to live in harmony with the brethren. From a positive standpoint we are commanded to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. This command is not to be made the basis of cavilling or casuistry. It demands obedience and compliance.

Its requirement is reinforced by other passages which encourage togetherness among the saints and forbid them to divide or to engage in strife. "We who are strong ought to bear with the feelings of the weak and not to please ourselves" (Romans 15:1). We are told to "welcome one another, therefore, as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God," and this is specifically said to be for the purpose of encouraging harmony with one another, accord with Christ Jesus, and glorification of God with one voice.

We are not to "set at nought" a brother, that is, pass judgment upon him, or declare him unworthy because of his opinions, scruples or rationalizations. Quarreling and jealousy are in a list of things which are said to be unbecoming (Romans 13:13), and anger, selfishness, dissension, and the party spirit, are works of the flesh (Galatians 5:20). Those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Not one time is division in the family of God ever recommended as a means of resolving differences or doctrinal disagreements. Every time division of God's children is mentioned it is condemned. Division is the work of the unspiritual and not of those who are led by the Holy Spirit. Speaking of scoffers, Jude writes, "It is these who set up divisions, worldly people devoid of the Spirit. But you, beloved, build yourselves up on your most holy faith; pray in the Holy Spirit; keep yourselves in the love of God; wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

It is ridiculous to quote the scriptures to justify factionalism when they were given to forbid it. No honest opinion, no sincerely held doctrinal view, can ever be made the ground for rejection of one of God's children. It would be absurd for God to warn that the party spirit would debar from inheritance of the kingdom, and then make provision for the party spirit and enjoin it upon us. Strife and division are the characteristics of those who are carnal and immature (1

Corinthians 3:1-4).

Unity in Christ is not conformity but community. We are one because we share a common faith, and not because we hold the same opinions. The only passage which declares there is one faith informs us that in our calling we must live "with patience, forbearing one another in love" (Ephesians 4:2). Patience and forbearance are not qualities of robots, but of thinking men and women. God made us to differ mentally as we differ physically. We can no more all think alike than we can all look alike.

We are not in the fellowship because we see everything alike, or because we like everything we see. We are together because God has called us all, and received us all when we responded to his call. God did not call angels, but men! We are human before we are called and we are human after we are called. We are not changed into the perfect image at once, but "we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another, for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit" (2 Corinthians 3:18).

Being human, there is only one type of unity possible for us, and that is unity in diversity. If we do not accept this form of unity there is no other for us. Fellowship results from a mutual sonship; brotherhood from a common Fatherhood. We are not one because we have all attained to the same degree of spiritual growth, but because we are all in the same family. We are not one in opinion, but one in Christ Jesus. To interpret the word of God to fragment those who are in the Son of God, and thus to justify their carnality and immaturity, is to do despite to the Spirit of grace.

The living Word was made flesh to bring us together in the Lord. His was the task of reconciliation and recovery. The written word is the account of how He accomplished this magnificent and divine purpose, and is provided so that we may

know how to enter into it and become a part of it. It is cruel to turn the sword of the Spirit against those who have been born of the Spirit. It is insane to take the weapon given us to battle the forces of darkness and use it to spill the blood of the soldiers of light.

It will be our task in the chapters which lie ahead to show how a misunderstanding and misapplication of the written word has been the means of sowing discord among brethren. We shall seek to recover the spirit of God's revelation in the revelation of God's Spirit. The prayer of Jesus for the unity of the believers will be our watchword as we attempt to untwist the scriptures and place them in proper order and context. Ours will be an honest attempt to let the word of God speak for the God of the word!

Except They Be Agreed

Contents

Amos was the farmer who turned prophet at the insistence of God. He did not know when he did so that he would become the chief oracle of the traditional party of the "unity by conformity" advocates in the Christian Dispensation, almost three millennia after his death. It really was not his fault. The whole thing came about because of the semantic quirk of a group of translators appointed by a king who wanted a Bible he could authorize to be read in the pulpits of the Episcopal Church.

When the eminent linguists came upon a list of questions proposed by the prophet to account for his intrusion upon a rather hostile area, they unfortunately made him say, "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" The roving eyes of the text-seekers and sermonizers glimpsed this inadvertent question and it was thereupon made the basis for numerous dissertations intended to prove that no two people can walk together unless they are agreed.

Obviously, no two of the proponents of this peculiar and unworkable philosophy agree upon everything, so with the true, casuistic rationalization which is part and parcel of the party spirit, agreement was limited only to the opinions upon which the party was arbitrarily founded and which gave it grounds for perpetuity. We propose to examine this statement of Amos in full context and show how it has become one of the twisted scriptures.

Solomon was the last monarch of the twelve tribe kingdom in its undivided state. In the days of his son and successor, a revolt occurred because of the oppressive taxation required to maintain the opulent splendor of the regal family. Ten of the tribes seceded and set up the Kingdom of Israel under Jeroboam. He immediately introduced calf-worship at Dan and Bethel and plunged his domain into idolatry from which it never recovered. In 220 years nine different dynasties succeeded each other to the throne as a result of suicide, conspiracy and assassination.

If the reign of Jeroboam II in the fifth dynasty seemed an exception because of outward prosperity, it was deceptive. The undercurrent of degeneracy continued unchecked beneath the surface. Because of it God called a prophet to denounce the open and flagrant sins of the people. The man whom he selected was not a recognized prophet. He had not attended one of the schools of the prophets which had flourished since the days of Samuel to train young men in the prophetic role. He was a simple farmer living in the wilderness serenity surrounding the little village of Tekoah, six miles south of Bethlehem and twelve miles south of Jerusalem. His livelihood was derived from the rustic pursuits of herding cattle and caring for his orchard of sycamine figs.

Since he lived in Judah, the commission to go to the king's court in Bethel, was a call to invade a hostile region. The message he was to deliver was calculated to make him even more unpopular. He was to denounce the corruption which was so prevalent, but he was also to foretell the captivity and exile of the people at the hands of a rapidly growing alien power. Amos went as God had instructed him and he lifted up his voice against the immorality, injustice and intemperance which characterized the lives of the people, with such effectiveness that something had to be attempted to thwart his effort.

The local priest was Amaziah. He was a fawning sycophant on the payroll of the King. He began his attack by telling

Jeroboam that Amos was a conspirator. He implied that he was an infiltrator who was collaborating with the Davidic regime in Judah, commissioned to come up north to create unrest and dissension. He then confronted Amos and ordered him off the royal property and out of the country, closing with the words, "Don't you ever again prophesy at Bethel, for it is the king's sanctuary, and it is a temple of the kingdom." He did not mention that the temple was dedicated to calf-worship!

The country preacher was not easily frightened. He pointed out that he was not a professional making his living out of the trade of prophesying and was not even a seminary graduate. He was actually following the flock at the very time the Lord said, "Go, prophesy to my people Israel." He then informed Amaziah that his sons and daughters would be slain, his wife would have to become a prostitute in the city to support herself, his real estate holdings would be parceled out to strangers, and he would become a captive and die in a foreign land.

Because of the fearlessness of Amos we think the first part of his prophecy deserves some attention, especially since the "scriptural scrap-doctors" as Alexander Campbell always referred to them, have abused one of his statements to make the prophet mean something that he never implied. The passage to which we allude is found in Amos 3:3 but we will start at the beginning of his book. Chapter 1 begins with a specification of the time when the prophecy was uttered. It was "two years before the earthquake," a tremor of such magnitude that the people in Jerusalem fled from it as they would the day of the Lord (Zechariah 14:5).

To begin with, it is important to note that the Lord is referred to as a lion whose den, or place of abode, is Jerusalem in Zion. This metaphor is not farfetched when you recall that to the ancients the lion was the very symbol of strength and power. And it is affirmed that the voice of God is so powerful, and his

predictions are so certain of fulfillment, that the very pastures dry up and the dew-covered summit of Mount Hermon withers. The roar of God is expressed through his prophets.

It is apparent that when God roars as a lion it betokens his judgment upon the nations. The time has come that he will rend them as prey. So there follows in swift and regular succession pronouncements against Damascus, in Syria; Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon and Ekron, in Philistia; Tyre, in Phoenicia; Edom, Ammon and Moab. After this list is completed, the prophet comes to the two kingdoms which have sprung from the seed of Abraham, Judah and Israel.

The utterances against these last two bring the prophet to the place where he addresses all of the tribes as a whole. They are more responsible than any other nation for two reasons. First, God personally formed them as a nation by delivering them from the womb of Egypt; secondly, he claimed them for his own out of all the nations of the whole earth. Now he speaks against them because the day has come when their iniquities and judgments have met. Throughout all denunciatory prophecy runs the thread of certainty that God will bring to judgment every evil work. The divine appointment is that inevitably the sin and its punishment must meet.

Since this is the very nature of divine justice the prophet appeals to natural reactions to illustrate it. He exemplifies it by two people walking together because they had made a previous appointment to meet, a lion roaring because he has captured prey, young lions snarling in a den as they tear their food, a trap or snare springing shut because a victim has hit the trigger, or people in a city running for shelter when the official trumpet signals an alarm. His argument is simply one of cause and effect. He reasons that for every effect there is a cause and you may determine the cause by observation of the effect.

He concludes by pointing out that God does not visit his

wrath upon a city without revealing his secret to the prophets. When the prophets speak it is the voice of God and the populace should react accordingly. The prophet cannot resist speaking the word of God; the hearers should not resist obeying it. "The lion has roared; who will not fear" The Lord God has spoken; who can but prophesy? With this introduction we are prepared to look at the prophetic message itself. Here it is as found in the King James Version.

> **Can two walk together, except they be agreed?**
>
> **Will a lion roar in the forest, when he hath no prey? will a young lion cry out of his den, if he have taken nothing?**
>
> **Can a bird fall in a snare upon the earth, where no gin is set for him? shall one take up a snare from the earth, and have taken nothing at all?**
>
> **Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?**
>
> **Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.**
>
> **The lion hath roared, who will not fear? the Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy?**

The art of sermon-making, a skill wholly unknown to the new covenant scriptures, has led its practitioners far afield in their ardent quest for texts. When one is found which seems to suit the propaganda purpose of the hour, they operate and remove it from the contextual body, and by copious injections of their own intellectual distillate seek to make it develop into a new body of its own. No creation of homiletic fantasy better illustrates this than the use of Amos 3:3 by modern advocates of unity based upon conformity. The proponents of the cult of the rubber stamp have seized upon this passage as the one stone which will grind their grist, and wherever they speak the sound

of the millstone is heard in the land.

As any person of even the slightest scholarly bent can ascertain for himself, this is an absurd abuse of the prophetic intent. Not only was Amos not providing a text for a sermon on unity but the passage is not even remotely connected with the use made of it by solemn clerics who weave from this one little filmy thread a gossamer web to cover all of the saints in all of their association with each other.

Can two walk together unless they be agreed? Do two people have to agree upon everything in the world before they can walk together? If so, no two people on earth will walk together, or ever have done so. Shall we interpret God's word to forbid and make absolutely impossible the very unity which it repeatedly commands? But I am told that this does not mean they must agree upon everything. This surrenders the whole argument. Either two people must agree upon everything in order to walk together or else two people can walk together who are not agreed, and you will need to find a new text for the ridiculous doctrine based upon conformity.

The utter absurdity into which people are driven by forced exegesis to sustain a presupposition and partisan position was observed not long ago in the home of a certain preacher. He contended that two could not walk together unless they were agreed. His wife challenged his statement. She mentioned that she had never agreed with her parents on their attitude toward her brother but they still all continued to walk together as one family. She and her husband then got into an argument and could not even agree upon what it meant to be agreed, but the last I heard they were still walking together— and arguing as they walked.

The Meaning of the Passage

But what did Amos mean? We will be helped in our

understanding by consulting other versions. First, I shall refer to the translation by Robert Young, who was the author of various works in Hebrew, Chaldee, Samaritan, Syriac, Greek and Latin, and who is best known to most of us as author of an *Analytical* Concordance. Dr. Young was quite critical of the King James translators for laxity in translating and compiled a lengthy list which he designated "Lax Renderings," and which I have found most interesting. He translates Amos 3:3, "Do two walk together, if they have not met?"

Many of our readers will possess, or have access to a Revised Standard Version, and can easily ascertain that it renders the passage, "Do two walk together unless they have made an appointment?" It will readily be seen that if these are correct, the use of the passage as descriptive of the nature of unity is forever barred to honest men who walk in integrity and do not "handle the word of God deceitfully."

The original word for "agreed" is *yaad.* **This is a primitive Hebrew root which is defined by** *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* **thus, "To fix upon (by agreement or appointment) by implication to meet (at a stated time), to summon (to trial), to direct (in a certain quarter or position), to engage (for marriage).**

The word translated "agreed" has not one thing to do with the attitude, purpose or nature of two people while walking together. The agreement is to meet and walk together, and is not related to walking together in agreement. The agreement or appointment precedes the walking together as the cause precedes the effect. The word *yaad* **is not marriage, but engagement to marry. It is not occupying a position, but directing one to it. It is not a trial, but the summons issued to appear for trial. It is not the state of walking together, but a prior appointment to meet and walk. Men might make an agreement to meet and walk together to debate their differences.**

The word occurs in the same form and tense 19 times in the Hebrew scriptures. It is translated "meet" nine times of which six (Exodus 25:22; 29:42,43; 30:6,36; Numbers 17:4) refer to God's appointment to meet his people in the tabernacle. In Joshua 11:5 it relates to meeting together by appointment of a number of kings at the waters of Merom to fight against Israel. In Nehemiah 6:2,10, it refers to the attempt of Sanballat, Geshem and others, to meet with Nehemiah, to work mischief. The meeting never occurred.

Even more revealing is the usage of the word in Job 2:11, concerning Job's three friends who came every one from his own place, "for they had made an appointment together to come to mourn with him and to comfort him." The boldface words are the translation of *yaad***. Any student of the book of Job knows that these three men did not agree. They argued with each other, accused Job, and attempted to speak for God. When they had finished, a youthful companion who was standing by listening, became so angry at their replies he pitched into the debate and told them all off. The three friends of Job did not meet to agree, they simply agreed to meet.**

The fact is that the only unity possible on this earth for *thinking* **people is unity in diversity. Unity by conformity is a unity of puppets or automatons. It is the unity of those who surrender their right to think and reason. And it is not really unity at all, but a mere sublimation of one's faculties and rational powers and a bowing to tyranny or dictatorship.**

In a very perceptive statement, Ralph Waldo Emerson labeled groups requiring conformity, as "communities of opinion":

> **Most men have bound their eyes with one or another handkerchief, and attached themselves to some one of these communities of opinion. This conformity makes them not false in a few particulars, authors of a few lies, but false in all particulars. A man must consider what a**

rich realm he abdicates when he becomes a conformist.

When Thomas Jefferson was defending the "Virginia Act for Religious Freedom," he said:

> **Subject opinion to coercion: whom will you make your inquisitors? Fallible men; men governed by bad passions, by private as well as public reasons. And why subject it to coercion? To produce uniformity. But is uniformity of opinion desirable? No more than of face and stature.**

But it was Alexander Campbell in his chapter on "The Foundation of Christian Union" appearing in his volume called *Christianity Restored* **who pointed out that conformity in opinion has been the real basis of all sectarianism. His statement deserves earnest study.**

> **But men cannot give up their opinions, and, therefore, they can never unite, says one. We do not ask them to give up their opinions— we ask them only not to impose them upon others. Let them hold their opinions; but let them hold them as private property. The faith is public property; opinions are, and always have been, private property. Men have foolishly attempted to make the deductions of some great minds the common measure of all Christians. Hence the deductions of a Luther, and a Calvin, and a Wesley, have been the rule and measure of all who coalesce under the names of these leaders. It is cruel to excommunicate a man because of the imbecility of his intellect. We never did, at any time, exclude a man from the kingdom of God for a mere imbecility of intellect; or, in other words, because he could not assent to our opinions. All sects are doing, or have done this.**

Unity in the *domestic realm* **is unity in diversity. A man and his wife become one flesh, not because they are alike, but because they are not. It is their unlikeness, their diversity, which makes physical unity possible. They are not uniform in their**

mental and intellectual attainments. Differences arise and arguments ensue in the very best of families. We do not assume that because a husband and wife differ as to which is the best brand of coffee that they no longer have a united home. We do not think the family ties are severed because a teenager prefers a stick-shift sports car while his mother insists on buying a large job with automatic transmission.

There never was a family in which every member thought alike and there never will be. Families stay together because their love for one another as persons transcends every other consideration. Their need for each other is greater than their need to be right on every matter of opinion. When a man and woman promise to love, honor and cherish each other as long as the two of them live, they enter into a covenant to receive one another as persons in love. They certainly do not pledge that they will always see everything alike.

Unity in the *governmental realm* **is unity in diversity. I am thrilled indeed to be a citizen of the United States of America, but I am not so foolish as to think that all fifty states are alike, or that every citizen is agreed with every other citizen. I know there is a great difference between the elected representatives of Alaska and those of Alabama. Missouri is not like Montana, and Vermont differs from Virginia. It is our very diversity which makes it possible for us to exist in unity. Our national unity was born in the heat of debate and the constitutional convention which acted as a ramp for launching the Ship of State almost came apart before the vessel hit the water and unfurled her sails.**

Those who postulate there can be no unity except upon the basis of absolute conformity ought to cross their fingers and "take King's X" every time they salute the flag and murmur, "One nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." We are not agreed upon tariffs or taxes, legislative programs, executive powers, or supreme court prerogatives. We never have been. We have survived two hundred years, not

because of our agreements, but in spite of our disagreements. We are held together by an ideal we have never reached, and by a conviction that every man is endowed by the Creator with certain unalienable rights and that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Unity in the *spiritual realm* is unity in diversity. Unity upon any other basis would make it impossible for us to share in fellowship with God. There is a great difference between the creator and the created, the potter and the clay, the shepherd and the sheep. If God had waited until I understood everything as He did before He accepted me, I would never have been able to share in His blessed fellowship. He did not receive me because I was like Him. If I was like Him I would not need acceptance. I would have been God.

The fact is that God took me as I was, in my ignorance and arrogance. He accepted me not because I was worthy but because I was not. And He did it because, in His infinite grace, He was able to love me in spite of myself. The divine-human fellowship is one which spans vast areas of human ignorance. It makes it possible for the Maker to receive into His bosom those who cannot read or write, those who are not only ignorant of fine-spun, and even rough-hewn doctrinal distinctions, but who may not even be able to spell doctrine. The unity proposed by the Father is predicated upon faith, and that faith is simply trust in a person, a trust so great and powerful as to motivate the believer to commit his whole life and being to that person as Lord and ruler.

The word of God is quite plain as to the basis upon which we must receive one another. "Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God" (Romans 15:7). It would seem fairly obvious, I think, even if the apostle had not stated it so bluntly, that we should receive each other on the same basis as God received us all. The divine grounds of acceptance ought not to be improved upon by mere mortals.

This means we will need to receive those who do not see a lot of things as we do, and never will. We shall have to receive them upon the basis of their faith in Jesus and in spite of some of their immature ideas and peculiar notions. The community of saints will never be a "united notions" complex.

When men respond to the good news about Jesus by their acknowledgment of the proposition that He is the Anointed One, the Son of God, and by being baptized as an acknowledgment of His Lordship over their lives, we receive them, for it is upon this basis God receives them. We no more assent to all of their opinions, ideas or concepts than God does. We do not receive them because of the number of things upon which they are right, but because they have been set right with God, being justified by faith!

It is tragic that men, searching for a text and a prooftext as a peg upon which to hang a sermon outline, would fasten upon Amos 3:3, and abuse and misuse it in such a way as to destroy the very fellowship which they profess to proclaim. One need not be a scholar of Hebrew to avoid the mistake of thinking that Amos made a journey to Israel to lay a foundation for unity in Christ upon the basis of doctrinal agreement. An examination of other translations would save him from such an error.

Robert Young renders it, "Do two walk together if they have not met?" The Revised Standard Version reads, "Do two walk together unless they have made an appointment?" This is a good place to point out that any proposition which depends for its proof upon one version, and which can be sustained only by appeal to such a unique rendering should be regarded as suspect. It must be recognized that all subsequent translators could be mistaken and those selected and appointed by the King of England could have been right, but there is at least room for doubt when the later translators, looking at the original and having the King James Version before them, revised the rendering.

In our day of mobility and rapid transportation facilities it is easy for people to meet by chance and converse together. Every person who reads this will recall "running into a friend" unexpectedly at a shopping mall and engaging in an exchange of ideas. It was not that way in the time of Amos. When you saw two men walking across the open plain or desert you could be reasonably certain they had made an appointment, and it was no chance occurrence. So the version referred to above recognizes the circumstances of carrying on a conference as the result of a previous engagement to meet. "Do two walk together unless they have made an appointment?"

In Christ Jesus I walk together with men with whom I seriously disagree about a number of things. The truth is that I have never met a person with whom I fully agree upon all matters of understanding. If I must walk only with those who see everything as I do I will never walk with anyone. But I respect the right of others to read the Word of God for themselves, to make their own deductions and form their own conclusions. I do not want anyone else to impose his opinions upon me so I refuse to impose mine upon him. The same scripture which allows me liberty of judgment will allow it to all others who eagerly search for truth.

This is not, as some foolishly assert, merely "an agreement to disagree." Rather, it is a calm recognition of reality while we are imperfect beings in the flesh. As I investigate more fully I may be led to concur with the divergent views of my brother, or, upon the same basis, he may come to agree with mine. At least twice in my life I have differed with brethren in the Lord and both of us have changed. As a result we still differed but had merely shifted sides in our discussions. This did not affect our personal relationship in Christ, because it was not based upon conformity of opinion or understanding. We differed in Jesus, and not about Jesus. And there is a lot of room in Jesus for honest differences. The divine umbrella of love is not as narrow as are the hearts of a lot of those under its protection. It shades a

lot of people who do not think alike or see alike. That is why it is important that we are to be judged by the Lord and not by men.

It is an interesting observation that those who head for Amos 3:3 for a text of unity, actually are not trying to promote unity at all. They are searching for grounds on which to justify their separation from others. Everyone of them postulates unity upon agreement with himself or the party or faction for which he is the front man. Each should make Amos say. "Can two walk together toward glory unless they agree with us?" Even if two were perfectly agreed after long and arduous study they would not be considered as faithful or loyal unless they agreed with the speaker. There have been occasions when as many as three different men used Amos 3:3 as a text on the same day in the same town, and no two of them could even agree on what they had to agree upon to walk together.

It is time for men to grow up and free themselves from traditional explanations and expositions which have long since been proven to be invalid. Men can walk together in Christ and not agree upon a host of things if they put Jesus above all else in their lives. What we need to do is to agree to walk together regardless of the attempt of Satan to fragment us into warring tribes and belligerent factions.

Another Gospel

Contents

It was my lot to grow up in one segment of a religious movement which, like many other such historical attempts to recapture the ideal of the first century community of the saints, had become fractured into rival factions. It had been inaugurated chiefly by earliest Presbyterians, with the assistance of a few worthy thinkers from other backgrounds, who were, as one of them phrased it "tired and sick of the bitter jarrings and janglings of the party spirit." Accordingly they launched a program to unite the Christians in all of the sects."

It was not the only project begun for this purpose at that particular period of time. There were a number of "restoration movements" whose adherents pleaded for men to "return to the original pattern as set forth by the apostles," and a favorite title for sermons was "Seeking the Old Paths." It is not essential to my present purpose to detail all of the tributaries which converged to form the rushing river of "The Second Great Awakening." It is sufficient to say that under its influence hardy thinkers began to proclaim to a frontier people that unity in Christ Jesus was attainable in the wilderness of a fresh new world, provided that all men would search the scriptures and "restore the ancient order of things."

All of these movements without exception, eventually became both divided and divisive, contributing to the "jarrings and janglings" which they started out to eliminate. The particular movement with which I was directly affiliated, and of

which I became an ardent defender, was doomed to become one of the most fragmented upon the contemporary American scene. It ended up with more than one division for every decade of its turbulent existence from the day of its beginning until the present.

It is not difficult to assess the causes for the disturbing result. On the other hand, given such causes, the result was inevitable and should have been predictable. But hindsight is often better than foresight. One can more readily read the signs of the times by looking backward than by trying to scan the future. Frontier peoples, who are often deprived of those amenities which a stable society takes for granted, tend to define their learning and goals in capsule form. In this form they are easily remembered. Significant happenings are memorialized in simple ballads, wisdom is reduced to pithy proverbs, and life purposes expressed in slogans.

The real danger in this is that men repeat the slogans until they become a substitute for thinking. They remember the slogan and forget the purpose. In the particular movement with which I was identified one of the earliest proponents coined the expression, "We will speak where the Bible speaks, and remain silent where the Bible is silent." This worthy resolution became the watchword of the movement and when it did, was translated by attitude and action into a weapon rather than into an instrument of righteousness.

More than anything else it tended to develop a prooftext approach to the sacred scriptures and men became "scrap doctors" as Alexander Campbell referred to them. The tendency developed into a way of life and men searched the scriptures to validate presuppositions, and to find justification for what they already thought and did. A generation arose which spoke *where* the Bible spoke, but was not concerned in speaking *as* the Bible speaks.

When division in the family of God, which is always condemned by the Holy Spirit in the divine revelation, began to be sanctified by quoting passages to justify it, the flood-gate was opened. Every faction, fragment, splinter and sect could "prove" that its exclusiveness and separation was the will of God, sanctioned by heaven and authorized by the new covenant scriptures. Each sect froze knowledge at its own level, each established its own plateau, and each made additional discoveries above and beyond the partisan norm a crime punishable by banishment and exile.

As absurd and ridiculous as it may seem to the real scholar of the divine disclosures, every minor detail of difference and debate was branded "another gospel" and the unfortunate soul who had not stopped thinking when he reached the partisan plane was accused of "preaching another gospel." He might be, and often was, the most spiritual person in the group, humble, prayerful and loving, but this counted for nothing if he could not conscientiously bring himself to remain confined in the partisan straitjacket of orthodoxy.

If he held a different view about the millennium, music, or missionary methods, he was guilty of "bringing another gospel." Even though he accepted every word about Jesus as recorded by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and literally steeped himself in their testimony, if he could not concur with the party position as to the time and meaning of "the thousand years" in Revelation 20, he was preaching "another gospel" and he was expected to be accursed by God after having been excommunicated by the sect.

As a kind of mitigation of the hardness and rigidity which settled down like a pall to halt further movement, it cannot be forgotten that it was alleged "respect for the authority of the Word" which created the sectarian status. A number of factors contributed to the condition. Basic to the entire system was the mistaken concept that we are still under law rather than grace, and that the love letters of the apostles constituted a written code

of divine jurisprudence, the terms of which had to be enforced by certain men invested with the power to determine the conditions of union and communion for each developing party.

As a corollary to this false foundation there was an undermining of the real purpose of the new covenant which was to create an association of free men and women, joined to each other only because they were joined to Jesus. New yokes began to be hewn out to replace the one delivered to Moses and each party whittled and shaped its peculiar yoke to fit the cast of its leadership and recognized interpreters. Divine distinctions were obscured in the fog of factional debates, and men began to defend their novelties as ardently as their fathers once opposed them.

It is not easy to assess the relative importance of fundamental errors in the rise of any system of thought, because, with the passing of time, they become intertwined and matted together. In the movement in which I grew up I think one of the principal mistakes consisted in confusing the gospel of Christ with the apostolic doctrine addressed to those who had obeyed the gospel. Many forgot that the gospel was the good news of what God had done for men in Christ Jesus, while the doctrine consisted of instruction as to what men in Christ Jesus must do to walk worthy of their vocation. Eventually the term "the gospel" became the equivalent of the whole of the new covenant scriptures, and one who held a divergent view about any passage was adjudged as being unfaithful to the gospel.

Since we will be pursuing the subject in our next chapter we propose now an investigation in context of the term "another gospel" as used by Paul in his letter to the Galatians. Here are his words:

> **I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:**
>
> **Which is not another; but there be some that trouble**

you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

> **But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.**
>
> **As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed (Galatians 1:6-9).**

It is my conviction that none of the troublesome issues which create problems among those who are firmly convinced that Jesus is the Anointed One and God's Son, the Lord of life, constitutes "another gospel." Certainly when controversy arises over such matters as the millennial reign, or the nature of the work of the Holy Spirit in our day, someone is wrong, and all may be. But neither side is proclaiming another gospel, and the accusation that either is doing so may be far more dangerous and damaging to the cause of Christ than the error under dispute.

One has not "left the gospel" or "deserted the gospel" who "through the Spirit waits for the hope of righteousness by faith." He may be ignorant of the meaning of many things in the apostolic letters, and wrong about a lot of things he thinks he understands, but he does not "preach another gospel" when he expresses his views about his deductions and opinions. If we are to "speak as the oracles of God" and if we accept the letter to the Galatians as a part of those oracles, it is important that we determine what Paul said and what he meant by what he said.

Historical Background

Galatia was a district located in the great peninsula called Asia Minor, the region we now know as Turkey. It was populated by the Gauls, a rude and boisterous people from the land of the Rhine who migrated into Greece, and about 280 B.C.

went on into Asia where they carved out a home for themselves which came to be called Galatia, "the district of the Gauls." Julius Caesar, who made their name familiar to every high school Latin student, described them as volatile, restless and changeable. The apostle apparently found the description accurate.

It appears that when Paul proclaimed the good news to them the first time it was because of a physical condition. It has been suggested that because of some weakness or illness he could not travel further and, rather than consume the time in idleness he preached the gospel to the inhabitants of the area (4:13,14). Characteristic of their enthusiasm they received him "as an angel of God." Borrowing a phrase from the Grecian games the apostle told them "Ye did run well."

He was not gone from the region very long after visiting it the second time until disturbing reports reached him. Judaizing teachers had entered the area and were spreading the propaganda that one could not be justified by faith in Jesus. He must be circumcised and come under the law, or be lost. To further their nefarious course they sought to discredit Paul. They denied he was a true apostle, and contended that he was inferior to Peter and the other apostles whom Jesus called. They implied that whatever he proclaimed was a secondhand message, having been learned from the other apostles at Jerusalem. In view of this they contended, all must look to Jerusalem for the fullness of the gospel.

In that portion of his letter with which we are directly concerned Paul met their accusations head-on and without cavilling. He was not an apostle of men, neither by man. He was not commissioned by any man or set of men nor was he selected by human agency. He was an apostle sent forth by Jesus Christ under the authority of God the Father (1:1). He said, "The gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it but by the revelation

of Jesus Christ (1:11,12). He did not confer with flesh and blood, nor go up to Jerusalem to counsel with the other apostles, when he was called (1:16,17)

Since the good news he declared was given to him by revelation of God and not by repetition of men, the apostle was astounded that those who had been introduced into the grace of God by that gospel, could so soon be lured away and seduced by another gospel, which was actually not another gospel at all, for it was not good news. It was at this juncture the apostle wrote, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."

What is the gospel? Before one can designate a thing as "another gospel" he must be able to identify the original gospel. The gospel, by etymology, is good news. It is not a system of doctrine, a philosophy of life, a compilation of laws, or a code of ethics. It is good news about a person and what that person has done for us in our hopeless, helpless and hapless condition. It is not a message for the saved but for the lost. It is never addressed to saints but to sinners. It is never proclaimed to the church but to the world.

The gospel is designed to make believers. It is intended to create citizens out of aliens. The word is our translation of *euangelion***. It is an evangel and you do not evangelize saved persons. It is sadly amiss to talk about preaching the gospel to the church unless the church is composed of those who have never come to Christ, that is, who have never obeyed the gospel.**

The gospel which Paul proclaimed in Galatia did not originate with man (1:11). It was not the presentation of borrowed "sermon outlines." It was the "gospel of Christ" (1:7), the good news about Jesus. It consisted of preaching Christ among the Gentiles (1:16). It was "preaching the faith he once tried to destroy" (1:23). What was that faith? "And I said, Lord,

they themselves know that in every synagogue I imprisoned and beat those who believed in thee" (Acts 22:19). It was belief in Jesus which Paul sought to destroy. It was faith in Jesus which he later proclaimed.

The careful student of the Galatian letter will at once see that the good news was a proclamation that we are justified by faith in Christ and not by works of law (2:16). There was no good news in a reign of law. Those who rely for justification upon works of law are under a curse (3:10). No man can be justified before God by law (3:11). If justification were through law, Christ died to no purpose (2:21). If inheritance were by law it was not by promise (3:18). The utter futility of law lies in the fact that it must leave men dead. "For if a law had been given which could make alive, then righteousness would indeed be by law" (3:21). There is no such law, either human or divine.

Law confines and keeps under restraint. It binds but cannot free (3:23). It makes a person under it "no better than a slave" (4:1). Men had to be redeemed from it before they could even receive adoption as sons (4:5). It is impossible to be justified by faith in Jesus and try to be justified by law at the same time, because one binds while the other frees. One cannot be both a slave and a son, because the adoption as sons frees from the bondage of law. One who seeks to be justified by law, or by legal conformity, severs himself from Jesus. "You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you are fallen away from grace" (5:4). Nothing is plainer than the statement, "You are not under law, but under grace." You cannot be under both at once. The attempt to be will make of us schizophrenists in the spiritual world.

Salvation is a state of right relationship with God. Jesus did not come merely to keep us out of hell but to keep hell out of us. He came to reconcile us unto God. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." We do not enter this relationship by bargaining with God. We cannot earn it,

purchase it or deserve it. We cannot bid on it or for it. It is not what we do for God that brings us into this relationship but what He has done for us. We are saved by grace through faith. It is not of ourselves. It is not of works. Study Galatians 4:1-7. "We were slaves . . . but . . . God sent forth his Son . . . God hath sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts." We could not adopt ourselves into His family. We had nothing by which to purchase our redemption from the slave pen. "So through God you are no longer a slave but a son."

Our response to the grace which sent a person to become sin for us, and to reconcile us, is faith in that person. This is what justifies. Justification has to do with freedom from guilt. We are not justified because we are guiltless for all of us are guilty. We are not justified because we have done something to free ourselves from guilt for no one can ever undo an act he has committed. Not even God can do that! We cannot "take back" what we have done. But Jesus is guiltless. He is the sinless one. If we are in Jesus we are not in a sinless state but in a sinless person. If we trust in his righteousness, that faith or trust is reckoned unto us as righteousness, or justification. Justification must always be a gift of God. We cannot give anything to God to meet a need of His. We must be always on the receiving end.

To one who works, what he receives must be counted as wages. It is not a gift. One who works has something coming to him, but no man has anything coming from God. He cannot be placed in our debt. We cannot keep books on God or "figure our own time." "To one who does not work, but trusts him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness" (Romans 4:5). To be in Christ does not mean we have not sinned. It does not mean our sinful acts have been undone. It does not mean that we are guiltless. It simply means that in Christ Jesus God can treat us as guiltless. He can, through Jesus, reckon our faith as righteousness and not reckon our sins.

The gospel is the good news, the glad tidings, the joyful

announcement of that justification by faith in Christ Jesus. It is the welcome communication from heaven that by trusting in Jesus in complete surrender and commitment, God will regard us as if we were without sin, since we are in one who is in that state. This is the gospel which Paul proclaimed in Galatia. It was the good news that Jesus was not as powerless as Greek wisdom and Jewish legalism. Salvation was not hinged upon arriving at wisdom or coming under the law, but coming into a person! God has made Him "our wisdom, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption" (1 Corinthians 1:30).

The gospel is Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He is the good news, the greatest good news in all the history of sinful man. Paul declared that the message brought to Galatia was "Jesus Christ publicly portrayed (or placarded) as crucified" (3:1). *The truth* **of that gospel, that is, the essence, the basis, the central theme was justification by faith in Jesus Christ. Truth is reality, stripped of all extraneous matter and naked of all artificial covering. The glad tidings to the world consisted of announcement of the most tremendous, magnificent and earth-shaking principle in the universe— that justification is by faith in the Son of God. This is the core of the message. This is "the truth of the gospel."**

Shortly after Paul had gone from Galatia, members of the circumcision party came and told those who had heard the good news that something else was required, that faith in Jesus was not sufficient. No doubt their message was the same as that which they promulgated in Antioch, "Except ye be circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved" (Acts 15:1). When the controversy waxed hot in Antioch, Paul and Barnabas went up to Jerusalem to consult the apostles and elders. They took Titus along as a test case. They encountered "false brethren secretly brought in, who slipped in to spy out our freedom which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage— to them we did not yield submission even for a moment, that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you"

(2:4,5). Paul was not here talking about the veracity of the gospel. If he yielded on this occasion, the principle of justification by faith, *the truth* of the gospel, would have been washed down the drain by the flood of legalism.

When Peter went to Antioch he ate with the Gentiles, until certain men came from James at Jerusalem. "When they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party" (2:12). This was a repudiation of the principle of justification by faith in Jesus and an adoption of the tenet of the party— you must believe in Jesus *and something more* to be in the fellowship. Peter caused a division with his unwritten creed. Others were drawn into the faction, including Barnabas. Paul saw that "they were not straightforward about *the truth* of the gospel." Do not be mistaken. Peter still believed in Jesus. So did Barnabas. But they lent their influence to those who insisted that this was not enough to be justified.

Paul proceeds to define the truth of the gospel in one of the most sublime passages in the Galatian letter. "We ourselves, who are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners, yet who know that a man is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ, and not by works of the law, because by works of the law shall no one be justified" (2:15,16). To profess this as the marrow, or kernel of the gospel, and then, under partisan pressure, tack something else on to it as a condition of salvation, is to act insincerely and to be "not straightforward about the truth of the gospel."

Those who were in Christ in the days of the apostles were in error on many points. They were mistaken about a lot of things, but they were not charged with "preaching another gospel." Freedom from error is not a condition of salvation else all men would be damned. We are not saved by attainment to a certain degree of knowledge but by faith in Christ Jesus. It is by belief of facts related to Him, and not by grasp of abstract truth,

that we are justified before God. Certainly it is not by performance of meritorious deeds nor by legalistic conformity. When we postulate a program of justification by knowledge we hang ourselves on the gallows we have constructed to rid ourselves of others, unless we are prepared to make ourselves even more ridiculous by affirming that we know as much as God.

No honest opinion held by one who is in Christ Jesus and who respects His Lordship, is "another gospel." Since it is the gospel which forms the basis of the fellowship with the Father, the Son, and with one another in Christ, such an opinion can never be made a test of union or communion in Jesus. A man may hold a view as to the perseverance of the saints, the manner of the resurrection, or the second coming of our Lord, and he may prove to be as wrong as one could be, but he cannot be debarred from citizenry in the kingdom of heaven by the other subjects, any more than one can be disenfranchised in the United States because he disagrees with the government space program or the approach to overseas help.

No man "preaches another gospel" simply by being mistaken about some aspects of the will of God, otherwise one would need to know perfectly the divine will or he would be a perverter of the gospel. It is common in our day for some to level the charge at their brethren who disagree with them over some means or method for implementation of God's will that they are "preaching another gospel" and "apostatizing." Those who do this, regardless of motive, reveal their ignorance of what constitutes both gospel and apostasy.

We need to give serious thought to the problem of "another gospel" because there is a grave danger that those who are most vociferous in their accusation that others are preaching "another gospel" are treading on thin ice. They may be guilty of the very thing of which they accuse others. Actually there is no such thing as another gospel and cannot be. The gospel is the

good news that we are justified by faith in Christ Jesus. Anything else is just not gospel. That is why Paul said, "I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and turning to a different gospel— not that there is another gospel, but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ."

To offer justification, or right standing with God, upon some other basis than trust in Jesus, may appear to those who hear it to be "a gospel." They may regard it as such and even accept and designate it as such. Ultimately they will learn it could not deliver what it offered, and that there is only one basis for a right relationship with God. Then that which appeared so plausible and convincing, which seemed so rational and documented, will be shown to be empty and frustrating, and not good news at all.

When men make a test of union or communion out of some method, mode or machinery for accomplishing God's will and refuse to recognize as in the fellowship those who do not concur in their special brand of orthodoxy, they hinge justification upon faith in Jesus Christ and *something else*. The "something else" is agreement with their understanding, inference or deduction from the scriptures as regards that thing. Their creed is no longer simply Christ but conformity with a factional pattern. Whatever any party makes a test of fellowship is its creed. Whatever one must accept to be regarded as loyal is a creed.

To make one's right standing with God depend upon standing right upon other things rather than upon surrender of himself in trust to Jesus, is dangerously near to perverting the gospel. This was the mistake of the circumcision party in the days of Paul. Let it be understood that Paul did not regard circumcision or lack of it as of any avail in establishing that relationship. "For in union with Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor lack of it counts for anything; but only faith that is spurred on to action by love" (Galatians 5:6). Many quote

Galatians 1:6-8 and apply it to others when they are actually the ones who set up other unwritten creeds and pervert the gospel with their partisan terms of fellowship and justification.

Not every divergent view is another gospel. Not every area of disagreement makes the one who disagrees with us a perverter of the gospel. There are some questions which are in order and to which we should face up. Why do those who profess to love God seek so eagerly to brand their brothers and apply hurtful and prejudicial epithets? Why are they so anxious to set at nought their brothers for whom Christ died? Why are they so bent on smiting their fellow-servants while the Lord is absent?

Is this the "more excellent way?" Is this the royal road to unity? Will this accomplish the purpose for which Jesus shed His blood? Will it answer His prayer for the oneness of all believers? If God deals with us at the judgment in the same cold legalistic fashion in which we deal with His other children, will any of us be saved?

I would like to urge my readers to carefully consider a quotation from *The Declaration and Address*, **written in 1809 by Thomas Campbell at Washington, Pennsylvania.**

> **That although inferences and deductions from Scripture premises, when fairly inferred, may be truly called the doctrine of God's holy word, yet are they not formally binding upon the consciences of Christians further than they perceive the connection, and evidently see that they are so, for their faith must not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power and veracity of God. Therefore no such deductions can be made terms of communion, but properly do belong to the after and progressive edification of the Church. Hence it is evident that no such deductions or inferential truths ought to have any place in the Church's confession.**

It is a lack of discrimination which has been responsible

for most of the tragic divisions among the children of God. Their zeal has been misdirected because of the lack of discernment and the inability to distinguish between things which differ. They have confused the good news which brings men into a relationship with the doctrine or teaching upon which they are to be nourished and nurtured in that relationship. They have confounded that which produces our very being with that which is essential to our well-being, and which belongs to our after and progressive edification or spiritual growth.

In closing I will provide another quotation which should give us all pause, when its content soaks into our consciousness. It is from the pen of Alexander Campbell, the son of the man who wrote the previous citation.

> **The present partyism is a disgrace to our profession. It is fatal to the progress of piety and truth . . . The key of knowledge is virtually taken away, and ages of darkness are again spreading sable wings over a slumbering world. We must awaken from this sleep of death— this fatal lethargy that has seized the body ecclesiastic. Men are fighting about chimeras, loving and hating, approbating and disapprobating one another for reasons they do not comprehend, and, if comprehended, they would blush to see the illusions and phantoms that have bewildered them.**

Gospel and Doctrine

Contents

> *And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned* **(Mark 16:15, 16).**

Incredible as it may seem, this has become one of the "twisted scriptures." As a result, that which was ordained to save the world is used to divide the church. That which was designed to be glad tidings to hungry sinners has become sad news to harassed saints. All of the confusion stems from the fact that many have lost the scriptural distinction between the gospel, the Message to lead men to believe in Jesus as the Son of God; and the doctrine, which is a course of instruction for the training, development and growth of the children of God.

There is as much difference between the gospel of Christ and the apostolic doctrine as there is between the sperm from which a child is begotten and the food which he eats after he is born. The purpose of the gospel is to enlist men in the army of Christ; the doctrine constitutes a manual of arms and book of discipline to develop the soldiers into a fighting force. The first is an announcement that the school of Christ has been opened and eligible scholars will be accepted for enrollment; the latter is the curriculum for daily study by the students, or disciples.

Before we deal with the scriptural connotation involved let us understand why, what has become a traditional

interpretation, is conducive to division and destructive of unity. The common fallacy assumes that all of the apostolic epistles are part of the gospel of Christ and any exposition of the doctrine contained in these letters is preaching the gospel. Since Jesus makes salvation contingent upon believing the gospel, and superficial students generally confuse belief with knowledge, it is further assumed that those who do not subscribe to the orthodox interpretation placed upon every passage thereby "reject the gospel." Each sect, party or faction, thus makes its traditional explanations and deductions "the gospel" and we end up with as many "gospels" as we have parties.

It is easily understandable that the ones who so reason will conclude that only those who are allied with the party will be saved, and all others are outside the pale since they have not "obeyed the gospel" (that is, subscribed to the unwritten partisan creed). But we learn from observation, experience and the sacred scriptures, that we do not all have the same degree of knowledge. God has made us all to differ in the intellectual realm as we do in the physical. We can no more all think alike than we can all look alike. No two of us on earth attain to the same identical degree of knowledge about everything at the same moment. As Will Rogers remarked, "We are all ignorant, but just about different things."

Any attempt to secure unity upon the basis of uniformity of knowledge or conformity in deductive or inferential processes (i.e., doctrinal interpretation) is doomed before it begins. It must inevitably end in dividing that which it seeks to unite. For this reason, those who make such attempts must always resort to creation of external authoritarian power structures in order to compel conformity. This is generally done by investing a person or group with an aura of infallibility so that all non-conformity with the orthodox creed can be equated with rebellion against God. To dissent is to "deny the authority of the scriptures." Every individual who desires to be regarded as "loyal" must surrender his right to reason and think upon God's revelation to

the "power bloc" and "unity" is maintained by legislation handed down, as well as by fear of social rejection by the group accompanied by reprisal for dissent.

Power Structures

In one sect the power structure is invested in a "universal father" whose pronouncements when made *ex cathedra* (from the chair) are accepted as dogma. This means that this one individual decides for all other individuals in the group what God meant by what He said or did not say, and such decision must be accepted as the will of God. Other sects, finding it repulsive to their Christian concept to exalt one man to such cosmic importance, reduce the power structure from a universal to a diocesan level, where the bishop becomes the final court of appeal.

Still other sects set up a parochial or congregational "power bloc," often consisting of a board of elders. Members of such groups are taught that to differ with the elders is to differ with God. The motto is "*Vox presbuteros, vox Dei*" (The voice of the elders is the voice of God). Every sect which confuses community with conformity is forced to recognize either an infallible interpreter or an infallible interpretation. Of course the procedure is not always as systematized and clearly recognized as those we have mentioned. Sects are like those who compose them and are inclined to be systematic or slipshod according to the nature and temperament of their constituents. Thus, in some cases, the editor of a recognized journalistic mouthpiece may arrogate to himself the mantle of infallibility and be allowed to wear it by default. His office becomes the clearing-house for all problems and his decision must be accepted as final.

The attempt to make conformity to the party norm the basis of unity is further complicated by the fact that the rational

processes cannot be stopped at a given level. Men who are capable of doing so will continue to investigate and will reach conclusions differing with their own orthodox views of the past. When they refuse to succumb to threat or coercion they will be driven out and division will result. Since it is only the more eager students and researchists who labor to improve their intellectual grasp it is evident that the thinkers will be excluded, while the guardians of the *status quo* will be retained to man the party machinery. Every faction seeks to freeze knowledge at an arbitrary partisan level, and every such faction does it by skimming off the brains from the top.

It is an outstanding achievement of divine wisdom that salvation is made contingent upon *belief of facts* incorporated in news, rather than upon knowledge of abstract reasoning or deductions drawn from doctrinal truths. The gospel is a unitive force because it consists of facts proclaimed by credible witnesses. These facts must be accepted or rejected. If accepted at all, they must be accepted as facts. All who so accept them are brought together in the one to whom they relate, regardless of ignorance about matters, immaturity, or lack of understanding of what will be further entailed. No subject should challenge a divided church more than the nature and content of the gospel. We propose to examine the word from the standpoints of etymology, scripture and scholarship. We make no apology for the length of our treatise because of the tremendous importance of the theme.

Meaning of the Word

Our English word "gospel" is from the Anglo-Saxon "gode spel," good news, and was chosen as the best equivalent of the Greek *euangelion*. This was formed by adding the prefix "eu," good, to a root meaning "message, tidings, or news." The gospel is an evangel and one who proclaims it evangelizes. One cannot evangelize saved persons, for the evangel is an announcement to

the lost. Its purpose is to lead men to a state of salvation or righteousness. One who believes the gospel and is baptized will be saved from his past sins, his unregenerate state or lost condition. The gospel precedes faith and produces it. It is not a fruit of faith but the seed of it. The gospel is addressed to unbelievers and not to believers.

The difference between the gospel and the apostolic doctrine is readily seen by application of simple logic. Jesus said, "Go into the world and preach the gospel unto every creature." The gospel is to be taken to the world. It is to be proclaimed unto every unsaved person. But the apostolic doctrine was addressed to churches composed of the saved, or to individual believers. Not a single epistle was addressed to the unsaved in the community, although the obligation to take the gospel to them was referred to in one instance (Romans). The apostolic doctrine was to "the church of God" (1 Cor. 1:2), "to all the saints in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 1:1), and "to the faithful in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 1:1). The apostolic doctrine was not to lead men to believe and be baptized but to tell them "how to behave themselves in the house of God" (2 Tim. 3:15).

One of the clearest passages showing the difference between the gospel which begets as a precedent to birth into the family, and subsequent instruction given to the sons is found in 1 Corinthians 4:14,15. "I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you. For though you have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel." The gospel is the spiritual sperm, the seed. The one who deposits it in the heart is the father, on the basis of principal and agent. Those who are born are sons. Others may teach or instruct them, but they receive life through the evangel, or gospel.

This is borne out by another apostle, Peter, who writes, "You have been born anew, not of perishable seed but of imperishable by the word of God which is living, and

indestructible." The writer identifies the seed thus, "This word is the gospel which was proclaimed unto you" (1 Peter 1:25). The King James Version leaves the wrong impression by translating, "This is the word which by the gospel *is preached* unto you." The Revised Version is more accurate. The gospel had been preached unto them before the new birth and in order to produce it. The gospel was for the world, the apostolic doctrine for the church.

With that keen sense of discrimination which characterized many of the pioneers who sought to unite the Christians in all of the sects, Alexander Campbell wrote:

> **There was teaching, there was singing, there was praying, there was exhortation in the Christian church, but preaching in the church, or to the church is not once mentioned in the Christian scriptures!**
>
> **Paul once, in his first letter to the church in Corinth, said he would declare to the Corinthians that gospel which he had preached to them, which also they had received and wherein they stood. We preach, or report, or proclaim news. But who teaches news? Who exhorts news? We preach the gospel to unbelievers, to aliens, but never to Christians, or those who have received it (*Millennial Harbinger*, April, 1862).**

William Hurte, a sincere and humble student of the word of God, was laboring among the fishing villages along the Banffshire coast in Scotland in 1879, when he saw the need for an expository work which would help the villagers to understand more fully the revelation from heaven. He began work on *A Catechetical Commentary* which was finished in October 1884. In this volume the author presents four thousand questions on the new covenant scriptures and his answers thereto. Here are his remarks about Acts 5:42:

> **The apostles rejoiced and went on with their work; but why does Luke use the two words "teach and preach Jesus Christ?" The words simply indicate the two classes**

to whom they were daily ministering. To the unconverted they preached, and to this class this word is strictly applicable, while believers were taught all things needful for life and godliness. To the former it is, and always must be, proclamation— i.e., preaching— while to the latter it must always be instruction concerning the Lord's will.

The Scriptural Usage

Every kingdom must stand in two relationships to the people of the earth. There are aliens and citizens. The kingdom of heaven is no exception, since it is the design of heaven to enroll as many aliens as possible into citizenry, and to train those who are inducted to become worthy citizens, there must be two separate and distinct messages from heaven. Both messages will be the word of God, but they will differ as to subject, content and aim. The first will *be* proclaimed to all men who have not entered into Christ and it must consist of such facts as will motivate the world to accept His sovereignty over their lives. The second must be a course of methodical instruction calculated to develop those in Christ from spiritual infancy to maturity.

The word of God informs us that there are such distinct messages and there are specific terms used by the Spirit to designate them. Since the messages are distinctive the bearers of the message are also distinguished by terms growing out of the nature of the messages. The announcement of news in the Greek world was made by a herald. The word for such a proclaimer was *keryx* and his message to the public, that is, the thing proclaimed, was the *kerygma*. This simply means a public announcement or declaration, as by a town crier. A herald might announce either victory or defeat. The news might be either good or bad. Thus, there is nothing in the word *kerygma* which indicates the nature of the tidings.

But the *kerygma* of the followers of the Messiah was

universally and uniformly good news. It was a joyful message. God had done something out of love for humanity and that something was a powerful demonstration of the riches of His mercy. So an additional term had to be used to describe it. That term was *euangelion*, which means "glad tidings." The bearer of this message was called *euangelistes*, that is, a bringer of good news. This good news proclaimed (or preached) by the herald was an announcement of victory in Jesus. It must be remembered that news has to do with facts and facts must be preceded by acts to which the proclaimer bears witness, or of which he has knowledge. In view of this, the *kerygma* took on a definite form. It was "the thing proclaimed" and that thing was called the gospel, or good news.

The chosen envoys of Christ had a special message for the alien world. That message was a proclamation of victory in Jesus. It consisted of the news of what God had done for those who were His enemies. Since it was contingent upon authority vested in Jesus, it could not be announced until the heralds had proof that He had been "Christed" (that is, anointed) and elevated to a position of universal lordship. The proof came visibly, audibly and experientially on the Pentecost following His ascension. Immediately the message was proclaimed! The gospel was fully and completely announced on that occasion. It was fully obeyed by all who accepted it. This was not a partial seed and those who were begotten were not born deformed or malformed. They were fully formed as God's children, although immature, as are all children at birth.

Nothing else was ever added to the gospel after that date, although doctrinal truths were revealed as required or when circumstances demanded. These truths were not part of the gospel and no one whose life was corrected or enhanced by understanding them was ever said to have obeyed the gospel again. Obedience of the gospel is an act once for all while partaking of the bread of life is a daily performance. The gospel produces life, the doctrine is for the training and discipline of

the children after they are born.

Careful study of the historical accounts of the proclamation indicates that it was a specific message as to content. It did not depend upon rationalization, deduction or inference. It was not a compilation of laws, a code of ethics, or a collection of abstract propositions. It was not a course of study or a curriculum. It was a simple recounting of facts, of acts performed in behalf of enemies of God, which, taken together, formed the *kerygma*. At this juncture we may correct a mistaken view of a familiar passage. We refer to 1 Corinthians 1:21, where the false concept is created by the rendering in the King James Version, "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

That this is important is evident from the fact that our hope of salvation depends upon it. Many interpret the word "preaching" to be the act of proclaiming. But God has not offered to save those who believe in the act of announcing something. The word for preaching at this place is *kerygma*. It has to do with the message and not with the action of the messenger. God has chosen *by the thing preached*, which appears as foolishness to the worldly-wise, to save those who believe. The later translations are more accurate in conveying the thought.

> *It pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe* **(Revised Standard Version)**
>
> *He in his wisdom chose to save all who would believe by the simplemindedness of the gospel message* **(J. B. Phillips).**
>
> *God decided to save those who believe, by means of the "foolish" message we preach* **(Today's English Version).**

Content of the Message

What were the constituent factors of the gospel? There

were seven of these as follows: the life, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, coronation and glorification of Jesus of Nazareth. All of these are facts centered around the person of Jesus. All are designed to bring joy to suffering humanity through faith in Him. Jesus is the gospel. He is the good news. To preach the gospel is to announce Jesus. Thus the apostle says, "We proclaim Christ— yes, Christ nailed to the cross" (1 Cor. 1:23). Again, "I resolved that while I was with you I would think of nothing but Jesus Christ— Christ nailed to the cross" (1 Cor. 2:2). It was by this message God chose to save those who believe and those who believe these facts and demonstrate the lordship of Jesus over their lives by obedience in baptism are saved.

The gospel is epitomized in the three saving facts— the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. There was no saving virtue for the world in the life of Jesus upon earth, sinless as it was. The ascension, coronation and glorification were essential to His acquisition of authority. It was the ransom and redemption purchased by His blood which made salvation possible, and it was the resurrection which brought life and immortality to light. By His death upon the cross He proved that He was willing to share our lot to the ultimate, by His resurrection from the dead He proffered us the opportunity to share His glory to the fullest. His death on the cross proved that He was the Son of man; His resurrection from that death proved that He was the Son of God. Accordingly, the apostle, in reasoning with the Corinthians about the resurrection, reminds them of the gospel which they had heard and which gave them life. The resurrection was a vital part of it.

> **Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he arose again the third day according to the**

scriptures (1 Cor. 15:1-4).

An analysis of this passage will show that the gospel had been preached, received, believed, and that it constituted a foundation upon which the brethren stood. It was now a matter of memory, something to be recalled. It is observable that the Corinthians were saved by the gospel. The saving facts which Paul enunciated were three in number. Certainly the first epistle to the Corinthians was not part of the *kerygma*— the gospel. It was a *letter* written to those who had already received the gospel and were saved by it. The letter was not an evangel but a course of instruction. It was not for sinners, but for saints. It was not to make believers but to make believers better.

Of course not all who had believed the gospel were equals in knowledge. Some still thought there might be something to idols (1 Cor. 8:7); some thought there was no resurrection of the dead (1 Cor. 15:12); some were men of knowledge (8:10); others were weak brethren (8:11). There were those who were feeble, less honorable and uncomely. There were parts that lacked (12:23,24). Paul hesitated to visit the saints because he wanted to spare them from personal censure (2 Cor. 1:23). He was afraid he would find "debates envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults" (2 Cor. 12:20). Yet all of these persons had been begotten by the gospel, and Paul mentioned the catalog of things to which we have just referred with the expression, "We do all things, dearly beloved, for your edification." Those who confuse the chastisement of a child with begettal and cannot distinguish between conception and correction are in a sad predicament, yet that is the very condition of those who confuse the gospel by which we are made alive with the doctrine by which we are kept alive, through daily feeding our hearts upon it.

To this reasoning and the abundant findings of scholarship, the orthodoxy of our day, developed by debaters and concretized by tradition has but one pat objection of any

consequence. An appeal is made to Romans 1:15, which reads, "So as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel unto you that are at Rome also." Assuming that the apostle intended to proclaim the good news about Jesus to those who had already heard it and long since accepted it, this is taken as positive proof that the good news is designed for saint and sinner alike and includes everything which should be taught to the church. It is hardly that simple and those who reach such a conclusion demonstrate that they are much more interested in justifying their preconceived notions than they are in unbiased exegesis. We propose to face up to this passage so glibly parroted by many who have never thought below the surface and who have fallen into the grievous error of searching only for a prooftext.

The Letter to the Romans

Simple logic will demonstrate that the letter to the Romans was not part of the gospel because Paul personally desired to go to Rome to preach the gospel. This would not have been necessary if it was to be preached to the church and if this letter was the gospel. It would seem strange indeed to write, "I am ready to preach the gospel unto you that are at Rome," if he was doing it at the very moment with his pen. Moreover, in Romans 10:16, he says, "But they have not all obeyed the gospel." If the letter to the Romans was part of the gospel, none of them had obeyed it, for it was just then in the process of being written. Yet before the Holy Spirit had revealed to him the content of the Roman letter, Paul had already "fully preached the gospel of Christ" from Jerusalem to Illyricum (Romans 15:19). Did he give each of these places a copy of the Roman letter before he wrote it to Rome? If not, one can fully preach the gospel of Christ without reference to, or inclusion of the Roman letter.

Did Paul intend to preach the gospel, that is, to evangelize the saved in Rome? Careful analysis does not indicate any such intention. In the first place, this letter was not addressed to the

congregation, or church, in Rome, but to the saints as individuals. In this respect it differs from the letters to Corinth, Galatia, Thessalonica, and other places. In his *Commentary on Romans*, **Moses E. Lard says:**

> **In other words, and briefly, it was written to all Christians living in Rome at the time. But it was written to them as individuals, and not as a body or church. This is a remarkable difference between the present letter and some others written by Paul. They are addressed to churches as such; this is addressed to individuals as such. Indeed, church unity or organization is not once alluded to or recognized in the letter, unless it be implied in chapter 16:17.**

These individuals were addressed from two aspects: as saints in Christ and as citizens in Rome, as the called of God and as Gentiles. Paul expressed a desire to visit Rome for two different reasons. He wanted to impart unto the saints some spiritual gift and share in the comfort derived from mutual faith (1:11,12). But he had also purposed on numerous occasions to come "that I might have some fruit among you, even as among other Gentiles" (verse 13). There can be little doubt that the "fruit" Paul sought consisted of persons won to Christ, and he wanted this "among you" on the same basis as "among other Gentiles." Christ wrought in Paul "to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed" (Romans 15:18).

One purpose of the Roman letter was to inform the saints at Rome that Paul was specifically called to bear the glad tidings to the Gentiles. He wrote boldly about it so they would not forget his special mission.

> **I have written to refresh your memory, and written somewhat boldly at times in virtue of the gift I have from God. His grace has made me a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles; my priestly service is the preaching of the gospel of God, and it falls to me to offer the Gentiles to him**

as an acceptable sacrifice, consecrated by the Holy Spirit (Romans 15:15,16).

Then why had Paul not come to Rome to win Gentiles? This would certainly be an important question to the struggling saints in the capital of the Empire. The answer is given:

> **It is my ambition to bring the gospel to places where the name of Christ has not been heard, for I do not want to build on another man's foundation, but as Scripture says, "They who had no news of him shall see, and they who never heard of him shall understand." That is why I have been prevented all of this time from coming to you. But now I have no further scope in these parts, and I have been longing to visit you many years on my way to Spain; for I hope to see you as I travel through, and be sent there with your support after having enjoyed your company for awhile (15:20-24).**

Paul wanted to bring the evangel to the Gentiles in Rome. He was not so ignorant as to try and evangelize the saved. He wanted to have fruit among the inhabitants of Rome as among other Gentiles. He said, "I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are in Rome also."

Why did the apostle use the expression, "To you that are in Rome also"? There is every indication that he intended for the recipients of the letter to share its contents with their unsaved neighbors— both Jew and Gentile. This would be a natural reaction to an apostolic letter in an area where no apostle's voice had ever been heard. This will also serve to explain the nature of such portions as the entire second chapter, which is addressed to the Jews who make their boast of God and rest in the law, and yet dishonor God by breaking the law. It will also explain the inclusion of matter found in the last half of the first chapter. This portion of the letter was written to convince the unbelieving

Jews and Gentiles of the need for justification by grace rather than by philosophy or law, both of which always end in a blind alley. Surely no one is so foolish as to think these portions are addressed to the saints of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This is not a mere personal opinion of the author. It is shared by many who are more competent and eminent theological scholars. Space would not permit us to cite many of these, but one is very pertinent and needs to be read. Dr. James Macknight was the author of *Apostolical Epistles*, and so universally known and highly regarded was his profound work that Alexander Campbell selected his translation for inclusion in his "Living Oracles" as he designated his translation of the new covenant scriptures. In the preface to his work, Dr. Macknight writes on page 51, as follows:

> **From the pains which the apostle took in this letter, to prove that no Gentile can be justified by the law of nature, nor Jew by the law of Moses, from his explaining in it all the divine dispensations respecting religion, as well as from what he says in chapter 1:7,13,14,15, it is reasonable to think that it was designed for the unbelieving Jews and Gentiles at Rome, as well as for the brethren; who therefore would show the copies which they took of it to their unbelieving acquaintance. And inasmuch as the apostle professed to derive his views of the matters contained in this letter from revelations, and from inspiration, it certainly merited the attention of every unbeliever to whom it was shown, whether he was a Jewish scribe, or a heathen philosopher, or a Roman magistrate, or one of the people; some of whom, I make no doubt read it.**

It was not only in his preliminary remarks about the nature and purpose of the letter that Dr. Macknight expresses this thought. In dealing with Romans 1:15, to which we have already made reference, he makes the following observation.

> **In regard that Paul, after acknowledging he was**

bound to preach the gospel both to the Greeks and to the barbarians, adds, I am "ready to preach the gospel even to you who are in Rome," the idolatrous inhabitants of Rome were certainly included in the expression "you who are in Rome." This verse, therefore, as well as the following, is a proof that the epistle to the Romans was intended, not for the Roman brethren alone, but for unbelievers also, to whom copies of it might be shown.

The Righteousness of God

But we will be asked about Romans 1:17, which says of the gospel, "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith." Does not the righteousness of God include all God has revealed, and does not this embrace the whole of the new covenant scriptures? If so, does not "the gospel" refer to everything in the new covenant scriptures? It is a common resort of orthodoxy to quote, "For all thy commandments are righteousness" (Psalm 119:172) and then take this passage from the old covenant scriptures and apply it to the letter of Paul, and reason that the gospel includes every commandment of God, regardless of nature or intent.

This is a good example of what happens when men scrap the scriptures and become hooked on the prooftext method of exposition. Aside from the honesty and integrity involved in such devious maneuvering of isolated passages as pieces on a chessboard, there is another factor involved in this instance which must not be overlooked. Those who make such an argument to bolster their presuppositions must rely solely upon the King James Version for the validity of their logic.

The Revised Standard Version reads, "For all thy commandments are right." The New English Version has it, "For thy commandments are justice itself." Again, let me suggest that it is a fairly safe rule that any argument which must depend for its whole strength upon the rendering of only one

version should not be given much prominence, to say the least. The fact is that David was not even dealing with the same theme in his lengthy psalm, as Paul had in mind when writing to the Romans.

What does Paul mean by "the righteousness of God" which is revealed in the evangel and is the subject of the good news? The Greek word here is *dikaiosune*, and it is a favorite of Paul. He was versed and grounded in the old covenant scriptures, having been at the head of his class in the rabbinical school of Hillel in Jerusalem. He knew that the old covenant scriptures constituted a primary and elementary school to provide a vocabulary for the school of Christ. The Hebrew terms which corresponded to *dikaiosune* were all derived from a verb—*tsadhaq*. The idea most frequently contained in these terms is that of vindication or justification. The meaning of the words does not imply that a righteous person is one who is right about things, but that he is "in the right," that is, in a state of righteousness, or justification. He is not infallibly right because of his actions, but wholly *in the right* by an act of God. That is why it is called "the righteousness of God."

Remembering that this is the word for "justification," we can readily see that no sinner can ever justify himself. He can never undo a single act nor recall a single word in order to become guiltless. He can never be justified by law because this would entail perfect conformity in every minute and meticulous detail, and the least infraction would mean death without mercy. Justification is an act of divine clemency, accorded not because of worthiness, nor because of anything that the guilty person may do to earn or deserve it. It is a manifestation of grace, a divine act of undeserved kindness.

We can now begin to appreciate what Paul meant in the memorable passage before us. In the gospel, that is the Good News about Jesus, is revealed the ground of God's righteousness, or justification. It is shown to be by faith in the Person of the

Message. Indeed the Person is the Message. And the reason for revealing in the Message that God's righteousness is by faith, is simply to produce faith in us, for even the prophet had declared that the source of life is faith— not law! Those who are justified are those who are in contact with the source of life. Righteousness is a state of right relationship with God, and God is the fountain of all life.

We are not justified or in God's righteousness because of superior knowledge, or because we have figured out all the riddles and solved all the problems of life. Salvation and sophistication are not the same. We are not justified because of intellectual powers or theological attainments. We could never know all there is to know if our lives depended upon it. We can be thankful that it does not. Our life depends upon being in the only person from whom all life comes, and our being depends upon sharing His life. Years before Christ came, the prophet had declared, "The just *shall live* by faith." Paul contends that this life is now available. It has come. It is revealed in the Good News of Jesus. It is no longer future. It is present. The age of which the prophets spoke is a reality. I want you to bear with me now as I paraphrase for you Romans 1:15-17.

> **Brethren, I should like to have you know that I frequently planned to visit you at Rome so that I could gather in converts to Jesus as I have done among other Gentiles. Because of my indebtedness to all tongues and classes, I am eager to preach the gospel to those of you who are in Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the Good News concerning Jesus; seeing that it is God's dynamic to produce salvation in all who believe the News, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in this Message God has revealed that justification is by faith, and this revelation is made to produce faith as our only hope of life, for even the prophets declared that faith was the key to life for those who are justified.**

Certainly this is a "free translation" but, after years of

study in the implication of these words of the Spirit, I am convinced that it best conveys the mind of God as I understand it to be revealed. It will also be observed that it preserves the basic core of the gospel which is justification by faith. This is what Paul calls "*the truth* of the gospel" (Galatians 2:5,14). The glad tidings about Jesus constitute a revelation that justification is by faith, in the full meaning of "faith" as Paul uses the word. It is only the apostolic usage with which we are concerned. All else is useless to one who wishes to understand the revelation of God

The Gospel Dynamic

The careful student will also detect at once the connection between Romans 1:16 and Mark 16:16 with which we began this chapter. In the commission Jesus sent the apostles into all the world to proclaim the gospel to every creature. He declared that those who believed the Message and were immersed would be saved. Now, Paul affirms that the Message is God's dynamic unto salvation to all who believe, whether Jew or Greek. Thus, the gospel is God's unitive force for mankind. It is the gospel which brings Barbarians and Greeks, wise and unwise, together in one body.

It is a tragedy to interpret the apostolic epistles in such a manner as to negate the apostolic gospel. It is a travesty on the spiritual walk to interpret the apostolic doctrine in such a way as to divide those who are united by the gospel of Christ, and thus make the cross of Christ of none effect. Orthodoxy has exacted a fearful toll on the body of our Lord, and will face a frightful responsibility for hacking the body to bits with the axe of partisan animosity.

It is belief of the facts about Jesus by which all of us are saved, if saved at all. This belief acknowledges His lordship over our lives, and thus commits us to acceptance of all the truths by

which we grow as we become aware of them. No man will be saved who deliberately rebels against any doctrinal truth which he understands and apprehends. No one will be lost because of merely mistaken views or human inability to grasp all of these doctrinal truths. The basis of our hope lies in sustaining a right relationship with God through Christ Jesus. If one is right about Jesus he may be wrong about a lot of things and still be saved; if he is wrong about Jesus he can be right about everything else and still be lost. The gospel is the Word of life put into words of life!

Many in our day are not actually proclaiming the gospel of Christ as the hope of salvation. They are projecting a system composed of traditional interpretations, opinions and ideas, often conflicting with each other, and demanding conformity to this system as the gospel. Such a course will always be divisive and schismatic. It contains the germ of strife implanted within it. It is non-unitive and disruptive by its very nature.

This is not to say that apostolic doctrine is not important. It does not argue that we should not seek to agree upon interpretation. It does mean, however that our hope of life is not contingent upon arriving at such harmony of understanding, and that it is, and always will be, an ideal toward which we must strive. Our differences about doctrinal matters that do not relate to the facts of the gospel, are occasions for discussion, and not for division. Until we learn what is the content of the gospel we shall lose the learned and confuse the unlearned.

Not one of the apostolic letters was written to bring men into the fellowship. They were all addressed to those who were in it. Never an admonition to live in harmony or to be of one mind was written to bring men into the fellowship. Indeed, it was because they were in the fellowship that these exhortations were invariably given. Harmony is not essential to entrance into fellowship, but fellowship is essential to any satisfactory striving toward harmony. It is because we have a common relationship

that we labor toward a better understanding.

To condition fellowship upon conformity in all of these phases is not to encourage unity, but division. To attempt to force conditions of growth as conditions of family relationship is to defeat the purpose of the Son of God and to disturb the peace of the one body. This is the indictment of that species of orthodoxy which blinds men and makes them think they are loyal to Jesus when they are chipping, chopping and carving His body to bits.

Our brethren need that gift of grace which enables them to "distinguish between things that differ." The cause of pure Christianity suffers among the masses because men who pose as teachers, and even would-be theologians stand before audiences and make disparaging remarks about any distinction in such words as "gospel" and "doctrine." If the only harm done was to prove the immaturity and mediocrity of their own scholarship one might keep still and allow them to bask in the feeble glow reflected and diffused through the veil which they wear in their reading of the Word, but they hinder the progress of reformation and remove the contest from the arena of universal thought to confine it to their own restricted corrals where none dare question and all must conform. It is for this reason that an examination of the scriptures in objective fashion is long overdue. There is a difference between the authority of the sacred scriptures and the authority of human interpretations placed upon them to maintain a traditional pattern and to perpetuate a partisan program.

The time has come to summarize what has been written. It is my conviction that God has designed and revealed two related but distinct messages, adapted to the needs of two divergent groups as pertains to the kingdom of heaven— aliens and citizens. The first is called "the gospel of Christ," the second "the apostles' doctrine." Both are of divine origin. Both consist of the words of God. Both are authoritative because of the author.

The word *gospel* is our English equivalent for a transliterated term, the Greek *evangel*. It means good news, glad tidings. The gospel is composed of seven historical facts about Jesus of Nazareth. It was fully proclaimed upon Pentecost. Nothing was ever added to it afterwards. The same identical message was heralded or announced to every creature under heaven. The intent of the good news is to convert aliens into citizens. It is a message to the unsaved and never to the saved, for the simple reason that the saved have already fully embraced its every requirement and demonstrated obedience to its every demand, and are no longer aliens. Only the lost are subjects of an evangel, and saved persons cannot be evangelized.

The "doctrine of the apostles" consists of a course of instruction designed to bring citizens of the kingdom to a constantly increasing sense of maturity and responsibility. It is those who have been immersed in obedience to the claims of Jesus upon their lives who continue steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine. Fellowship results from the gospel, growth within the fellowship is the aim of doctrinal development. The gospel brings men into Christ, the doctrine helps them grow up in Him.

So long as men seek to make fellowship in Christ Jesus contingent upon conformity of opinion, deduction, understanding and apprehension of apostolic doctrine, rather than upon faith in Him through the facts of the gospel, that long will they be purveyors of partisan loyalties and fomenters of factional strife. The gospel needs to be proclaimed to the whole world, the doctrine needs to be taught to the whole church, and every truth should be accepted as it becomes known.

Conformity or Diversity

Contents

Because of the divisions which men have created to separate believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, many of you who read this chapter will be affiliated with religious movements utterly different than the one with which the author is affiliated. For that reason apology should probably be made for the special allusions to the "Church of Christ" which will occur. However, it must not be overlooked that there is a kinship in our state which makes what is said about one fragmented movement relevant to all of the others. We may not all be in the same boat but we are all in the same ocean.

Too, it is important that all of us look with serious concern upon the problems which plague others. Because of our basic trust in Jesus none of us are wholly unrelated. Even though the doctrinal disagreements in one party have little relationship to those in another, at the center of our faith all of us are closer than we sometimes admit. It is as the spokes get farther from the hub they tend to become farther apart. The matters which create such a furor in one camp are looked upon with disdain and designated as sheer trivia in another. Every faction regards its traditions as having tremendous importance, while denigrating those of others. Few in these days place any emphasis upon eating of meats and keeping of days, yet these were questions of grave magnitude to the primitive saints.

Some of those who mistake conformity for unity appear to be startled when they first learn that we suggest there may be

unity in diversity. Actually we go much farther than that. We assert that if there is any unity at all it must be unity in diversity, if it is to be enjoyed by free men. There is no other kind of unity except for slaves. Our opponents themselves are proof of this. Not one of them is a member of a congregation where every person understands each scripture alike. Each party agrees upon the factional test which it has singled out and made the supreme issue. Upon every other matter the greatest latitude is permitted. Conformity does not make for better Christians, but for greater hypocrites.

Every group which contends for conformity of every member is inconsistent. Those who quote scriptures urging the saints to live in harmony under the delusion that unity and harmony are identical, misunderstand both human nature and the scriptures. There is a widespread notion that because the primitive saints were together and had all things common, and because they were of one heart and one soul, this means they all had exactly the same opinions and views of everything related to the Christian walk. Nothing could be more remote from the actual facts.

God made men so that as long as they are in the flesh they will be divergent in opinions. We can no more all think alike than we can all look alike. There is as much variety in our mental, as there is in our physical makeup. This is not an evil. It is good. It stimulates study and research. It is the soul of all discussion and investigation. Without it forbearance would be an unnecessary virtue and patience would become a lost art. Of even greater significance is the fact that if unity came by intellectual agreement rather than as a grace-gift from God, it could never produce a peace that *passes* understanding. No one will deny that our human understanding is frail, fallible and faulty. Peace that originated with it would always be imperfect. A stream cannot rise above its fountain or source.

Our unity is in a person, not in our personal opinions. We

are one *in Christ.* Ours is the unity of the Spirit. Nothing is more clearly taught in the word of God. The Spirit of God dwells in every child of God. There is but one Spirit and every one in whom the Spirit dwells is one with every other such person. Of course every one in whom the Spirit dwells will exert a conscious effort continuously to promote harmony and good will. He will be a peacemaker because only such can be called the children of God. But he will also recognize that harmony is a fruit of unity, and not the reverse.

God no more expects all of His children to be exactly alike than I do my children. Nor does he "tighten the screws" on them to enforce conformity any more than I would twist the arms of the members of my physical family. The truth is that His revelation teaches us we are different from each other, and it is because of this we are able to fulfill His purpose and carry out His will upon the earth. Mere likeness in every detail would make this impossible. A man is able to be one flesh with his wife, not because they are alike, but because they are not. Oneness is not exact likeness. Harmony cannot be produced by harping on one string but by blending the sounds from various instruments.

Areas of Diversity

1. In the primitive community of saints there was a diversity of *gifts* (1 Cor. 12:4-6). "Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in every one." The variety is in the saints, the sameness is in the Godhood. To eliminate the variety among the members would make the purpose of God of none effect. It is only when they recognize the source of their oneness that they can achieve a common purpose. "To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good" (verse 7). What was said of gifts bestowed supernaturally will also be true of gifts derived naturally.

2. There is a diversity of *functions.* "For as in one body we have many members, and all members do not have the same function, so we though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another" (Romans 12:4,5). There is one question proposed by the Spirit which we need to face. "If all were a single organ, where would the body be?" (1 Cor. 12:19). The divine arrangement is expressed in the next verse. "As it is there are many parts, yet one body." Our very diversity in function makes it possible to have unity in an entity.

3. There was a diversity in *understanding.* Some had to be addressed as babes in Christ (1 Cor. 3:1). Their grasp of truth was elemental. "I fed you with milk, not solid food; for you were not ready for it; and even yet you are not ready." Others were mature. "Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom" (1 Cor. 2:6). The impartation of wisdom was always on the ability to grasp what was taught. There was a difference from person to person and from congregation to congregation.

4. There was a diversity in *knowledge.* The apostle Paul pointed out that all knowledge was relative (1 Cor. 8:2). God's revelation is perfect for the purpose for which it was given. Man's knowledge of it is not perfect. In the community of saints at Corinth there were those who were fully aware that "an idol has no real existence" and "there is no God but one." There were others who were not so positive. "However, not all possess this knowledge. But some, through being hitherto accustomed to idols, eat food as really offered unto an idol; and their conscience, being weak is defiled." Thus the saints were divided into "men of knowledge" (verse 10) and "weak men" (verse 11). Yet they were both men for whom Christ died and to sin against one of these brethren was to sin against Christ.

5. There was a diversity of *customs.* It was true that in Christ Jesus there was neither Jew nor Greek, but it was also true that there were Jews and Greeks in Christ Jesus. These statements are not contradictory. The gospel did not require a

Jew to become a Greek, nor a Greek to become a Jew, in order to be in Christ Jesus. It was only in Christ they were one. This required adjustment to local conditions upon the part of one who traveled from one area to another visiting the saints (1 Cor. 9:19-23; 10:31-33).

Ragnar Bring writes,

> **They were all one in Christ. Their unity was far more profound than a fellowship between those who hold similar views, or who think alike, or who are brought together because of social fellowship and equality. The unity in Christ Jesus was a unity which remained in spite of external inequalities, just as the unity of Christ with God remained and did not in any way become less when Christ emptied himself and became man, "born of woman born under the law" (*Commentary on Galatians*, page 187).**

The nature of the unity in the early Christian communities was what made them so effectual. The world of that day was accustomed to a unity of exclusiveness which existed in fraternities and burial societies. In these people were brought together through mutual regard for each other and because of common secular interests. There was nothing strange about a synagogue composed of Freedmen, even in Jerusalem (Acts 6:9). But to find a congregation made up of men of different habits, customs, racial origins, etc., laboring as a unit because of a common love for Jesus this was impressive indeed. The deepest unity can never be that of conformity. It must always be unity which exists in and transcends diversity.

6. There was a diversity in *opinions.* The apologists for "the cult of the rubber stamp" can never successfully negotiate the depths of Romans 14. Here is a chapter deliberately designed by divine direction to tell us how to maintain unity in actual diversity. It forbids contempt on the part of one group for another, and forbids censorship on the part of the other. It begins with a fiat statement that we must welcome men who

differ with us about matters of opinion, and not for the purpose of involving them in disputes or debates about the differences. "As for the man who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not for disputes over opinions."

The very next verse shows that those whom God has welcomed need not see everything alike. There is room in Christ for men to believe different things and still be one. One believes he may eat anything, while the weak man eats only vegetables. What reply is made to this by defenders of orthodoxy. One man in Colorado who is the champion of a legalistic code of conformity as God's ideal for His family, declared in print that there was no room for varied beliefs among those in Christ. He asserted that the only believer was the man who could eat anything, while the weak man acted through lack of faith. His predicament only becomes greater for he has God welcoming men who act through lack of faith, or without faith. The record says, "He also who eats, eats in honor of the Lord, since he gives thanks to God; while he who abstains, abstains in honor of the Lord and gives thanks to God" (verse 6). Will our brother have people honoring God through their lack of faith?

Note the expression "in honor of the Lord." This is the key to many of our problems. When men cease to regard the Lordship of Jesus over their lives, what they do is not acceptable. But those who act "in honor of the Lord" may differ greatly and may be exactly opposite in their views about many things and still be accepted. No legalist can ever grasp this! He will argue that "one of them has to be wrong." Granted! Perhaps they are both wrong. Then how can they be accepted? The answer is that the basis of our acceptance is not that we are right about everything. This would require no grace to save us. Why is this not the basis of our acceptance? For the simple reason that the kingdom of God does not mean being right about such things. It is in a wholly different sphere and upon a different plane. Being correct or mistaken about such things as observing days and eating meats does not affect our standing in it. There

can be "diversity of opinions" about all those things in which the kingdom does not consist without affecting the constituency of the kingdom. "For the kingdom of God does not mean food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (verse 17).

When I think of the implications of this revelation from God, I am startled to realize how we destroy the work of God over matters wholly irrelevant to the kingdom of God. What we are doing, of course, is trying to make the kingdom after our own image. By seeking to become lords over the faith of others we end up being our own God. Each conformist uses himself as a criterion. Men must know as much as he knows, see things as he sees them, interpret passages as he explains them, hold the same opinion that he holds. Divergency is a sin, not because of disagreement with the party, for the party is but a projection of the partisan. It is a sin because it does not recognize his infallibility. To question him is to question God.

When another "infallible leader" arises in the party there must be a division. The party is the world, the religious universe of the factionalist, and there cannot be two infallible interpreters in the same world while they differ with each other. In case of difference each must have his own world. Every factional leader thinks of his party as the one holy, apostolic and catholic church of God on earth. This is the position of the Roman pope as respects his party. It is also the position of all the lesser papas in all of the orthodox parties of our day. True, in the changing climate of our day the pope has had to reluctantly refer to others as "our separated brethren" as do lesser popes refer to "brethren in error." Yet there comes to all of us in the controversies over means, methods and measures, the solemn warning, "Do not for the sake of food, destroy the work of God" (Romans 14:20). Does this principle apply to that which sustains a factional body as well as to that which feeds the physical body?

One Voice

We want to refer to one matter in connection with this which is so apparent that only those who are blinded by prejudice can fail to see it. Let us remember that when Paul wrote to the Romans the questions relating to eating of meats and observance of days were of tremendous importance and significance. They seem inconsequential to us now because they are not our problems. They have been displaced by other issues which will some day seem as trivial to others as questions about eating of meats seem to us now. But brethren were destroying each other over these matters when Paul wrote. The church was being shattered. These matters were made tests of fellowship and communion. If one had told the first century saints that the time would ever come when these would no longer trouble the body they would not have believed it. It will help us to remember the conclusions of the apostle.

The entire chapter (Romans 14) is given over to showing that men should respect and treat each other as brethren in spite of differing personal convictions upon these issues. The word "brother" occurs over and over and the expression "your brother" is of special importance. The theme is that brotherhood is a relationship created when God receives us (verse 3) and we need not agree with each other upon everything either to become brothers or to continue as such. After showing that we may maintain our divergent views and emphases, and be answerable only to God for them, the apostle concludes, "May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in *such harmony* with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with *one voice* glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (15:5,6).

Harmony with one another, and accord with Christ Jesus, are not contingent upon seeing everything alike. We do not have to settle all of our differences to be in harmony with one another. Harmony does not consist of seeing everything alike on the

understanding **level, but of welcoming one another on the** *faith level.* **This is a higher level upon which peace that passes understanding is created by the death of Jesus. He did not die to create a union of philosophers but a family of brothers. To predicate unity upon understanding is to sublimate faith to human knowledge, that is, to destroy the greater with the lesser. This makes the cross of Christ of none effect. Those in Christ do not have to settle all of their differences. All they need to do is to settle their differences** *in Christ,* **that is, to make the relationship He created by His blood greater than anything about which they differ.**

Notice again the expression "one voice." It would be foolish for the apostle to devote a whole chapter to proving that men did not have to hold the same views or express the same ideas about a great many troublesome things, and then end up by saying they must all speak the same thing about every point of controversy in order to please God. We conclude a community of saints can with "one voice glorify God" even while holding various opinions. The King James Version reads, "That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God." To be of the same mind and to speak the same thing— as Paul uses the terms— cannot possibly mean to think alike or talk alike about every issue arising to trouble the saints, else the apostle made a serious mistake in writing the chapter of which this statement is the actual conclusion.

The harmony of mind is on the faith level, and so is the harmony of speech or testimony. It is "the faith of the gospel" which produces our oneness of thought and speech, not faith in our understanding or interpretation of doctrine or dogma. Men may strive together in the clouds who would strive against each other in the valleys. The battle of faith must be fought on higher ground than that of opinion, speculation, or mere human acquisition of knowledge. The tragedy of our age is that we have been so busy hacking each other to pieces on the lower slopes that we can never gather enough united strength to storm the

ramparts. "Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear that you stand firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel." I have resolved to fight by the side of any child of God who battles for that faith. I shall not stop to kill my brother before I attack the enemy.

Basis of Conformity

Since every faction in the Christian spectrum exists on the basis of a special emphasis, either upon a particular scripture or a specific idea, what is the basis for the cult of conformity and order of orthodoxy in the "Church of Christ" to which I have alluded? I think it can be said without fear of denial that the basis of operation centers around 1 Corinthians 1:10. It is a twisting, warping and wresting of this scripture which leads them astray. It is astonishing that a passage written to offset and overcome division should be given an interpretation which can only produce and promote division, and which will open and aggravate numerous festering wounds without ever closing a single one.

> **Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.**

What does this mean? To what did the Holy Spirit refer by the expression "all speak the same thing?" What is it to be perfectly joined together? What is it to be "in the same mind and in the same judgment?" The quest for truth demands objective research into this language. We dare not evade it regardless of where it leads us. We must not color or shade it to justify sermon outlines in our portfolio. We can begin, then, by observing that when Paul admonished the Corinthians to "speak the same thing" he was not plotting sermon outlines or planning Sunday

school lessons.

The expression occurs within a setting and must be understood in the light of its context if properly interpreted. The family of Chloe had contacted the apostle and informed him that the church of God at Corinth was divided into four segments— a Pauline party, a Cephasite clan, an Apollosite auxiliary and a Christite cult. Each person was affirming aloud his affiliation to one or the other of these factions. The apostle wrote, "Every one of you says," and proceeded to show that they were saying they were not of the same party, or for the same leader. His exhortation to speak the same thing simply meant to desist from these factional identifications. It was given to cure a condition and must be understood in the sense of its application to that condition. The statement has not the slightest reference to conformity of opinion or interpretation. One did not have to speak the same thing about eating of meats, or keeping of days, for instance. There was room for differences in such spheres.

The fact is that Paul was not using an ecclesiastical expression when he urges the brethren "to speak the same thing." William Barclay writes, "The phrase he uses is the regular phrase which is used of two hostile states or parties reaching agreement." He translates it, "You should make up your differences." James Moffatt, aware of the historical account of a philosopher who ran into the marketplace to stand between two warring factions of Greeks, and who uttered these very same words, translates, "I beg of you all to drop these party cries."

Richard Francis Weymouth has it, "Now I entreat you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to cultivate a spirit of harmony." The New English Version renders it "agree among yourselves." Hugh J. Schonfield in *The Authentic New Testament*, **puts it, "all hold together." The apostle is not regulating expressions or voicing of ideas among those who are walking together in love. His design is to heal a breach or bridge**

an existing gap. "To speak the same thing" stands opposed to controversy or contention. "It is reported that there are contentions among you . . . I beseech you to speak the same thing."

Those who quote the passage to apply to enforced conformity and stereotyped expression are always inconsistent. They must leave broad areas where their partisans can say different things and remain in the factional fold. It is only upon the humanly formulated test of loyalty, the party shibboleth, that all must pass muster and walk the verbal chalk line. In the particular movement in which I was reared there are some twenty-five separate and distinct factions. Every one of these parties allows the greatest latitude in opinion (and often in moral and ethical behavior) except in the test of partisan identity. It is only demanded that, if one is to be regarded as "sound in the faith" he must speak the same thing on the issue around which the party rallies as its standard. "The faith" is the orthodox position, the totem pole of the party.

In every one of these parties the adherents differ on a great many things. They do not agree upon divorce and re-marriage, upon Christians bearing arms in war, or upon the qualifications of elders. All of these are considered as grounds for discussion while the party position is regarded as a basis for division. Who makes the decisions as to which things are vital and which are not? Who draws up the lists of things that are immune and exempt, and formulates the limitations and restrictions? Who surveys the extent of the yard to be enclosed by the fence inside of which the children may argue and fight while composing "the brotherhood?" Who is the supreme court to determine upon what bases we may "set at nought a brother" in absolute contradiction to the word of God which forbids it?

Perhaps the most glaring demonstration of inconsistency is found among those who compose the faculty of Liberal Arts Colleges, regarded as church-related schools and maintained by

contributions of members of the Churches of Christ. It is generally known upon every campus that certain teachers do not share the views of others. Conflicting and contradictory explanations may be given of certain passages from one classroom to another. Yet, as a body, these have reached an official interpretation of Revelation 20, and one who holds, the pre-millennial view is excluded and often not regarded as in "the Lord's church." It has been decided that the authorized and infallible interpretation of Revelation 20 shall be deemed, and is hereby decreed to be, opposed to the premillennial coming of the Lord, and this dogma shall be a test of fellowship, and of union and communion among the saints. Greater legalism hath no man than this!

The flagrant inconsistency of these college professors is seen in the fact that they laud as "giants" men who were avowedly premillennial in their interpretations. The books written by these worthies of another generation are required reading, yet if the men who wrote the volumes were alive today they would not even be allowed to lecture to a class composed of those who must pass an examination upon what they wrote. Since their day certain views have become part of the dogma. Fortunately, hundreds of alert young men and women in college are seeing through the incompatible and incongruous attitudes imposed by the factional spirit. A revolution has begun to restore Jesus to His position as Lord in practice as well as in word.

Thinking men and women can never be satisfied that all *must* understand Revelation 20 alike, while they *may* differ upon every other chapter in the Bible. Who determines the *must* and the *mays*? It is only those who twist such expressions as "all speak the same thing" into tools of conformity who must muzzle men's minds in one area of revelation while allowing them to run at will in other sectors. Of course, this all stems from a legalistic attitude which results from fear, not from faith. Men know they will not see every point of interpretation alike. They

never have. The libraries of thousands of volumes on religious themes prove it. If it were not so, no theological school would require more than one set of commentaries. It is interesting to see the variety of commentaries offered for sale by bookstores operated in conjunction with journals whose editors unrealistically declaim that we must all speak the same thing. There seems to be a lot of money made from the fact that we do not!

Fruit of Inconsistency

The factional tendency which asserts itself when men realize that they do not always infer the same thing from what they read, is to fasten upon a particular item of belief, and elevate it out of proportion to other items, and even exalt it above the cross of Christ. On this matter they take a positive and definite stand, and judge every person by whether "he speaks the same thing" on this issue. The tragedy of such a procedure is found in the fact that it destroys integrity, both in the intellectual and behavioral realm. When one becomes convinced that his relationship with Jesus is established and sustained, and that his loyalty is determined, by his position on some item of controversy, every other consideration is relegated to secondary status.

Conformity as a basis of unity is a fantasy, whether in the realm of politics, economics, philosophy or religion. Conformity by coercion is the gruesome weapon of tyranny, whether employed by a single ruthless dictator or wielded by an institution which cannot stand dissent. It is contrary to the nature of man and becomes a yoke of intolerance. Thomas Jefferson writing about the *Virginia Act for Religious Freedom in 1786***, said, "Subject opinion to coercion: whom will you make your inquisitors? Fallible men; men governed by bad passions, by private as well as public reasons. And why subject it to coercion? To produce uniformity. But is uniformity of opinion**

desirable? No more than of face and stature."

It is regrettable that legalistic minds searching for a prooftext to reinforce the weak framework of a sermon outline on unity by conformity, have wrested from its context the statement of the apostle that all should "speak the same thing." Nothing is more incongruous than to see partisan leaders quoting this at each other. It would seem the proper thing for them to do would be to provide an example of what they so loudly affirm. Bombarding one another with the same text in an argument is hardly a demonstration of what the apostle meant by speaking the same thing.

A great many students are perplexed by the statement "that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." Surely if conformity is taught anywhere it is taught in this verse. Again, the problem is one of context. The expression "Be perfectly joined together" is *katartizo***, which carries with it the idea of restoring to the original state or condition. It was used as a medical term for reducing a fracture, or setting bones in a joint or socket. We still talk about bones "knitting together." A good example is found in Galatians 6:1, "Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual should** *restore* **him in a spirit of gentleness."**

It is employed in Matthew 4:21 and Mark 1:19 for mending nets. In these cases it is apparent that the idea is to correct a situation so that proper functioning can resume. This is the reason for setting broken bones, for restoring a member discovered in a trespass, and for repairing a net. The appropriateness of this term will be seen when we remember that the word for "divisions" in 1 Corinthians 1:10 is *schisma***. This denotes a tear or rent, as in a garment. It is used in Matthew 9:16 for the rent which occurs when unshrunken cloth is used to patch a hole in an old garment. The corresponding verb** *schizo***, occurs in the word schizophrenia, a type of psychosis resulting in a split personality.**

With this background we can grasp the significance of what Paul is saying to the Corinthians. The fabric of brotherhood has disintegrated through cleavage and the formation of parties. It was impossible to discern the one body even when they met together in one place, because they maintained their exclusive partisan associations (Cp. 1 Corinthians 11:18,29). It was necessary to repair their grievous state so that the body could properly function again in the midst of a pagan society. Allow me to paraphrase the passage so you may understand what the apostle is saying to correct the situation.

> **I implore you now, my brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you stop your party cries so that the fabric of brotherhood will not be further rent and torn, and that you mend those rents which already exist by cultivating the same attitude and the same good judgment.**

The Repair Tools

We recognize that it is difficult for those who have been reared and trained in a legalistic attitude to surrender sermon texts and outlines which have grown hoary with repetition. They will fight to hold on to such heirlooms in spite of their lack of value, simply because they have been in the family so long. Accordingly, when full explanation is made in an open forum of the meaning of the apostle, someone who must make "a last ditch stand" always arises to demand what is inferred by the expression "the same mind and the same judgment." Those who have long postulated unity based upon conformity and scoffed at "unity in diversity" find it a difficult thing to swallow their partisan pride and say, "I have been wrong about the meaning of that scripture all of my life."

I know from experience what happens to an honest man who has been defending an outpost under the mistaken concept that it is the whole territory when he comes face to face with his

captain who demands that he haul down the partisan banner from above his walled fortress which he has so proudly defended. I also know the trauma which occurs when one must surrender his stock of ammunition, the scriptural passages with which he has been bombarding various camps of saints on the other side of the hill. I suspect there is ever the temptation to want to retain your side arms and continue to do a little partisan "bushwhacking" in your leisure time. So it never surprises me when a preacher in my audience digs in his heels, wraps the factional rope around his hands and hangs on for dear life while it slowly slips from his clutch and he looks wildly around for reinforcements, hoping the cavalry will come dashing down the slope at the last minute to save the party flag.

However, in this case, my own integrity will not allow me to compromise my conviction. I must insist that the apostle is not advocating conformity across the whole Christian spectrum as essential to oneness. Instead, he is dealing with a specific situation. The community of saints has disintegrated into four warring tribes, making the community of saints militant against itself. The apostle commands a repair job. He begins with an emergency measure calculated to halt the growing cleavage. "Stop these party cries!" (all speak the same thing). He then proceeds to the method of repairing the damage already done. "Mend the rents in the fabric" (be perfectly joined together)

A repair job requires tools. These instruments must be adapted to the task to be performed if the end is to be accomplished. The tool which Paul handed to the Corinthians for their work of restoration is labeled, "the same mind and the same judgment." No other device could fit a situation such as there existed. They must have the same mind as to what they were to try to do. They must have the same judgment as to how to accomplish it. The first refers to purpose, the second to method.

To assume that what was absolutely necessary in

correcting a critical emergency is normative for daily living and survival is indicative of shallow thinking. It is like insisting that one should throw away food and live on penicillin shots because this was prescribed when one had pneumonia. If all members of a household are aroused at 3:00 o'clock a.m. to rush one to a hospital with a ruptured appendix, we do not conclude they must all arise at that time each morning to demonstrate they are still members of the same family. Nor do we assume that because they functioned in such perfect unison under special stress they may not disagree with each other about many things and still love each other dearly.

There is room in Christ for differences. There is no room for division. It was division which Paul sought to *eliminate* in Corinth, but he only sought to *palliate* differences in Rome (Romans 14). You eliminate disease by curing it, you palliate a condition by easing it without curing it. The treatment for division is rejection of the condition. The treatment for differences is forbearance of your brethren. To differ with brethren is not a sin, to divide the family of God is a sin. We oppose division because we hate sin, we seek to reduce tensions and lessen areas of difference because we love brethren. We must regard division with intoleration while we treat differences in a spirit of toleration. Toleration is not *endorsing* something which you think to be wrong, it is simply enduring one who thinks it is right. It is a relationship sustained to honest brethren and not to their ideas or thoughts. A brotherhood is composed of thinkers and not abstract thinking.

So long as division exists in the community of saints we share in its shame even while laboring to overcome it. If we condone or defend it we also share in its scandal. No one in the family of God can be wholly free of disgrace as long as strife in the family is exposed to the open gaze of an unbelieving world. Not one individual can justifiably adopt an attitude of indifference or unconcern when the Lord has laid upon all the burden of being peacemakers. This requires much more than

being a passive peace lover. It demands an actively pursued campaign to restore peace— *to make peace.* **It is not enough to boast that you have never caused division. You may not have caused anything else either! If division exists in the community where you are, regardless of who created the situation, you are obligated by the authority of God's word to do something to repair the breach.**

This involves much more than a halfhearted invitation to another partisan preacher in the community to "Drop over sometime and we'll talk about our problems over a cup of coffee." It includes being able to drink the cup that He drank, and being baptized with the baptism He experienced. Peace must be waged. It must be relentlessly pursued. "Seek peace and ensue it." There must be a strategy of peace in which temporary defeats are never confused with a lost cause and skirmishes are not confounded with the war. Division must be seen in its true nature, as a damnable, destructive, defiant sin against God and the Majesty of His Fatherhood. The campaign for peace is not a game of tiddley-winks. It is an endurance contest which is not a struggle for men with weak hearts and sickly stomachs. Peacemakers must be "strong in the Lord and in the power of His might."

Contrary to the Doctrine

Contents

Any religious group which exists beyond the first generation has certain traditions, because the word tradition means "a handing over, or handing down." A tradition may be either good, bad, or indifferent. Not everything our fathers thought and taught was right, but not all of it was wrong either. It is a fallacy to think that everything old is outmoded. It is as great a fallacy to think that everything new is deserving of praise.

Sometimes traditions develop as to the method of doing things. The sacred scriptures must be implemented. They must be translated into action. The written word must become our flesh. A popular English paraphrase of the scriptures has been called "The Living Bible." Actually, it is no more a living Bible than any other translation, version or paraphrase. The real living Bibles are persons who are reproducing in their daily lives the image of Christ.

The word of God is unchanging. It is recorded in heaven but not necessarily in English. It was recorded there before English was derived and spoken. As men read the word and seek to carry out its implications for their lives they must select and develop means which seem to them best adapted to fulfill the requirements in their time. The means are not the scriptures, and may be altered as circumstances change. However, those who seek to do what God requires may soon confuse the medium with the message and reach the conclusion that to abandon the

first is to forsake the second.

As one generation passes away, the succeeding one equates fidelity, not only with trust in God's revelation but with adherence to the methods of the fathers. The tragedy of this is not that men continue to be ruled in what they believe by the living God, but rather that they are governed in how they manifest their faith by men who are dead. The grave has the same power as the glory. There may be nothing unscriptural about the tradition but if the human means no longer accomplish the divine will it is useless to retain them, much less to defend them as the will of God.

Sometimes traditions develop as to the interpretation of certain scriptures. Men in one age, beset by intellectual shortcomings and under constant attack, may search the scriptures for a means of defense of what to them seems God's will for their lives. The constant employment of the meaning they deduce from and assign to a scripture in the heat of debate may become the orthodox explanation, the recognized and official interpretation. Hallowed by usage, the explanation becomes the scripture in the minds of partisan communicants. To question the exposition is to doubt the revelation.

All of this is further complicated by the inborn resistance to change by religious movements which develop ponderous programs and intertwined institutionalism. It makes little difference whether the institutions are church-supported or church-related. They serve as bulwarks against alteration and imprison the movements they profess to liberate. The day an institution accepts a trust fund or creates a foundation it forfeits the freedom to die. It is almost impossible to set a captive movement free when its roots are matted with institutional roots beneath the surface. The legal, political and organizational ties make reformation virtually impossible.

One thing is certain. The cardinal law which governs every

religious establishment is self-preservation. The organization is concerned with two things— its image and its perpetuity. To protect itself it erects walls, digs moats and bars gates. Any suggested change is regarded as a threat, any new concept as a challenge. Dissent is treason and the dissenter a heretic. This is the universal stance of the sectarian spirit. Whether or not the sect bears a denomination coined to describe a facet of doctrine or government, or whether it brags of a name found in the scriptures makes no difference. The sectarian spirit is always the same, though "the theology" may differ.

We must recapture a sense of our integrity in the intellectual world. This does not mean setting up a false god of human wisdom or bowing at the shrine of philosophy. It does mean an unrelenting and unceasing quest for truth, and that for truth's sake, regardless of what that truth may do to our cherished positions of the past. The retention of any dross for fear of losing some gold is contrary to the basis of true scholarship and subversive of honesty. We should not hesitate to deposit what we have in the crucible of the present, for that which does not stand the test today was not right yesterday, even though we thought it was. The gold must be tried in the fire, not just in one generation but in every generation.

It is in this spirit of freedom and fearlessness that we are examining again those scriptures which have been twisted to create, condone or continue division. Our thesis is that any use of the written word to defeat the plan, purpose and prayer of the Living Word is an abuse. This calls for a restudy of the bearing and implication of those scriptures. When our application of the word of God produces the very opposite condition of what the word was intended to produce there is something faulty with our application. Thorough study requires time and thought. It cannot be accomplished in a moment and it does not always make for light reading. Franklin D. Roosevelt, in a speech delivered in 1938, said: "Freedom to learn is the first necessity of guaranteeing that man himself shall be self-reliant enough to be

free."

Romans 16:17

> *Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which you have learned, and avoid them.*

Of all the scriptures which have suffered from wresting, twisting and distortion, perhaps this one has suffered more maltreatment than most others. Written for the very purpose of protecting and preserving the church from division, it has become one of the chief instruments of such division. Ignoring the greater context in which it is set as a frame of reference, glib partisans apply it without modesty or reservation, to every honest dissenter from their factional programs.

The passage has been cited as grounds for excommunication of individuals whose consciences no longer allow them to kowtow to legalistic decisions or to "toe the party line." Indeed it has been employed to justify attack upon a congregation, or group of congregations, whose constituents had learned that the will of God was not served by the factional spirit, and whose only sin consisted of asserting their freedom in Christ Jesus. It has been a verbal club in the mouths of partisan leaders to try and "hold in line" those who had continued to study and were no longer interested in goose-stepping to a party tune. In the eyes of a sectarian leader anyone who differs with him is guilty of causing divisions and offences. He is acting "contrary to the doctrine which he learned," for the doctrine he learned was the factional interpretation which the leader taught.

What did Paul mean by "the doctrine which you have learned?" Whatever he meant it was something in which the Romans had previously been instructed before the apostle penned this admonition. The expression is in the past tense. Since Paul had never been to Rome it is obvious that "the

doctrine" is what he had taught in the previous part of this epistle, if he referred to what they had learned from him. In spite of that, I have heard this passage quoted and the expression "the doctrine which you have learned" applied to every little element of trivia which has disturbed the saints in the twentieth century. Every sect and faction regards its distinctive, peculiar and particular emphasis as "the doctrine you have learned," and those who subscribe to these partisan hangups are urged and exhorted to "mark" those who do not. Indeed, there is not a rallying point for any sect, regardless of how small and insignificant, which has not been exalted to "the doctrine you have learned," even though it has been taught but a decade or less! Certainly the saints in Rome never learned "the doctrine" which is debated in our day and used as a club to batter into submission or into silence those whose thought processes refuse to stop working!

It is almost unbelievable that thinking men and women could ever be led to believe that the apostle Paul would ever condone such a mishmash or hodgepodge as we have created, much less deliberately prepare the group in which we could sow the seeds of strife. Actually, such a position freezes knowledge at the partisan level. It makes ignorance a virtue and further learning a crime. If we are to listen only to those who agree with us in every particular we can never acquire additional knowledge. If we are to mark and avoid all who do not parrot our own particular party line we must continue at our present level of ignorance. Surely the apostle did not have in mind the creedal and dogmatic interpretation of each faction by the expression "the doctrine you have learned." That would perpetuate the very factionalism he wrote to prevent and offset. It would seem that all rational and sensible persons could see such an obvious fact.

The Doctrine Learned

What is "the doctrine you have learned"? What had Paul been teaching the Romans which would cause them to avoid those who were divisive? The entire frame of reference, the context both adjacent and remote, shows it was the teaching that *division among brethren is a sin.* **The doctrine was that no one should cause division. Briefly summed up, the doctrine which the apostle taught and the Romans heard was "Do not cause division or place an occasion of stumbling in a brother's way."**

The content of the four preceding chapters is directed toward advocating, exemplifying and enforcing this doctrine. The basis of the teaching is, "Let us therefore follow after things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another" (14:19). Anyone who disregards this doctrine and insists upon making tests of fellowship where God has not made them (i.e., over days, meats, etc.) should be observed and isolated so his factional attitude cannot divide the body into rival camps over such issues.

The argument of Paul related to Jew and Gentile, and the universal need for justification by faith, concludes with the benediction and "Amen" of Romans 11:36. In chapter 12 he begins his dissertation on the conduct becoming the saints, especially as related to unity and oneness. His doctrine is that God's family should not be divided. Its members should not be occasions of stumbling one to another.

Although many members, yet are we one body in Christ, and every one members one of another (12:5).

We are to love each other without hypocrisy (12:9); be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love (12:10); and be of the same mind one toward another (12:16).

We are to owe no man anything except to love one another (13:8), for love is the fulfilling of the law (13:10).

We are not only to deprecate strife and envying, but

actually to abhor them, and put on the Lord Jesus Christ, making no provision for the flesh and the exercise of any harmful passion (13:13,14).

There will be differences among the members. Past environment, the present degree of knowledge, various temperaments, and other factors, will enter in to make adjustment difficult. Chapter 14 is an inspired treatise on those attitudes essential to preservation of unity in spite of differences. The foundation of the approach is laid in verse one.

A man who is weak in his faith is to be welcomed. "Without attempting to settle doubtful points" (New English Version). "Not with the idea of arguing over his scruples" (J. B. Phillips). "Not to determinations or reasonings" (Young's Literal Translation). "Not for controversial arguments" (Authentic New Testament). "Not in order to pass judgment on his doubts" (Weymouth). "Not to pass judgment on his scruples" (Moffatt). "Not to criticize their views" (Charles B. Williams). "Do not discuss his opinions" (Charles Kingsley Williams). "Not for the purpose of deciding doubtful points" (Centenary Translation). "Not for the purpose of passing judgment on their scruples" (Twentieth Century Translation). "Not for disputing opinions" (Rotherham).

We are neither to despise nor judge one another (verse 3). We are to allow each to stand or fall to his own master (verse 4), and reach a personal conviction in his own mind (5). We dare not set at nought a brother, for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ (10). Each will give account of himself to God (12), so I am not accountable for my brother's conviction, nor am I accountable to my brethren for my own convictions. My brother is not answerable for me, and I am not answerable to my brother. Both of us are answerable to God.

The brotherly relationship must be more important to me than any thing upon which we disagree, and must be more

important than all those things which threaten its disruption. Under no condition am I to allow any opinion, scruple or personal conviction to destroy a brother for whom Christ died (15). The kingdom of God is composed of values which transcend all matters of argument over things which disturb its citizenry. It is made up of majestic qualities which are universally accepted within the body— righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit— and to elevate any secondary considerations to an equality with these qualities is neither acceptable nor approved (17,18).

Jesus died for persons and not for their opinions or ideas, right or wrong, and those for whom he died must be more important than anything for which he did not die. It is good to do nothing by which a brother stumbles, or is offended, or made weak (21). A man must not do that about which he has personal qualms or doubts, "because his action does not rise from conviction, and anything which does not rise from conviction is sin" (23).

The strong must accept as their own burden the tender scruples of weaker men and not consider themselves (15:1). Each must consider his own neighbor and think what is for his good and will build up the common life together. We are all to accept one another as Christ has accepted us, to the glory of God (15:7). As God accepted us in our weakness, with mistaken ideas, warped views and unhealthful attitudes, so we must accept each other in the same state or condition. We must not make the kingdom of heaven to consist of our convictions attitudes or opinions, but of citizens who must be tolerant of one another in such matters, otherwise there can be no kingdom of heaven at all. The doctrine the Corinthians learned was not to cause division, but to walk in peace, making allowance for differences.

Factional Persons

After having given this extensive teaching on avoidance of division and offences, the apostle recognizes there will be those who will not heed it. Even God cannot provide a doctrine that is proof against dishonest hearts or unscrupulous motives. There will always be some who refuse to serve Christ, but in their egotism and selfishness will create a factional atmosphere and seduce the minds of innocent people with smooth and specious words. There will always be men who set up their own little kingdoms, who recognize as brethren only those who recognize their opinion, and who will drive out the saints who will not bow the knee to them. What should be done with those who disregard the teaching about preserving peace and insist upon having their own way, regardless of the consequences? The answer is plain and forthright.

> *Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which you have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.*

A careful analysis of this passage in purely objective research does not indicate that the apostle is advocating public or corporate action at all. He is not telling a congregation that they should excommunicate certain ones. Those who take such a position have to read into the verse their own ideas. Indeed, the Roman letter differs from other epistles in that it is not addressed to a congregation, but to individual saints, as we have shown in a previous chapter. The "avoiding" here recommended to the brethren is individual. They are simply told to steer clear of those who would create division and to stay out of their way.

The factional spirit is like a flame. It must always have additional fuel or it will eventually flicker out. It is like a cancer. If it cannot reach additional healthy cells or tissue it will subside. It is obvious no one can ever create a faction without followers. If all of the brethren will simply hold at arm's length a smooth talker who advocates pulling away, he cannot harm the body.

Factions begin when members start fraternizing and sympathizing with factionalists. It will help us to remember that every factionalist seeks to carve out a body after his own image, and it is easier to carve soap or soft wood. When a factionalist starts wooing you to join a movement to pull away he has chosen you for the same reason that a termite chooses its timber— you are easier to work on! One is complimented when a factionalist passes him by and ignores him. He should examine himself to see what is wrong when he is made the target of a partisan who seeks to manipulate him.

"Mark them which cause division." The word "mark" is from *skopeo.* **This is the form of the word which appears in telescope, microscope, etc. It has to do with vision. It means, "to observe, watch, to keep an eye on." There is not one thing in this word which indicates any action whatsoever upon or against an offender. The action is all upon the part of the observer. It consists simply of keeping another under surveillance.**

Divisions is from *dichostasia.* **This is a combined form composed of a word for "apart" and one for "standing." It literally means "standing apart" and here it refers to "alienating one from another." It can be used to designate "divided loyalties" or to describe the condition that occurs when one segment of those who should be together allows a breach to occur which holds them aloof from others. Such a condition is a result and it proceeds from a cause. It is contrary to the will and purpose of God and one who produces the condition disobeys God.**

"Offences" is from *skandalon***, from which we get our English words "scandal" and "scandalized." The original has an interesting history. At first it referred to the trigger of a trap, the part to which the bait is fastened, and which tripped or sprung the snare when the intended victim took the bait. Later it came to apply to the contrivance or instrument as a whole. It is essential to the efficient working or functioning of a snare that it**

not be recognized for what it is and its real nature be concealed. W. A. Vine said the word is always used metaphorically in the New Testament of that which arouses prejudice, becomes a hindrance to others, or causes them to fall by the way.

"Avoid" is from *ekklino* which means "to turn away from, to hold aloof from, to stay out of the way." There is nothing in the word which implies any organized action, or formal discipline of the congregation. Indeed, Vine says, "In exhorting them to turn away from false teachers, the Apostle is not speaking of excommunication, but of personal dissociation from the offenders." Albert Barnes puts it this way: "That is, avoid them as *teachers*; do not follow them. It does not mean that they were to be treated harshly; but that they were to be avoided in their *instructions.* They were to disregard all that they could say tending to produce alienation and strife; and resolve to cultivate the spirit of peace and union."

The brethren were urged to avoid involvement with the person under consideration by keeping aloof from him or staying out of his way. If there is no congregational action implied in the terms "mark" and "avoid" there is none to be found in this verse at all. Those who abuse and misuse this passage to separate themselves from another congregation of saints over some point of difference are the perpetrators of division. There is a great deal of difference between keeping an eye on a brother who would make a partisan out of you and staying out of his way, and refusing to have anything to do with another congregation whose members sincerely disagree with some partisan interpretation. That is, there is a difference in keeping an eye on an infected member and taking a meat cleaver to the body.

J. B. Phillips translates the passage: "And now I implore you, my brothers, to keep a watchful eye on those who cause troubles and make difficulties among you, in plain opposition to the teaching you have been given, and steer clear of them."

Adam Clarke says: "Let them have no kiss of charity or peace, because they strive to make divisions, and thus set the flock of God at variance among themselves, and from these divisions, offences are produced, and this is contrary to the doctrine of peace, unity and brotherly love which you have learned."

James MacKnight paraphrases thus: " Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them who set up separate assemblies for worship, and who occasion the weak to fall by false doctrine, or by enjoining things indifferent as necessary, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned from me in this epistle, and avoid them."

In explaining the passage, Macknight says: "The apostle had in his eye the Jewish teachers, who in many churches set up separate assemblies for worship of God (see Jude, verse 19), on pretense of greater orthodoxy and sanctity than others, and who would admit none to their communion but such as joined them in their peculiarities, and who represented all others as erroneous and impious."

How Division is Caused

There is no more prolific cause of division than the orthodox interpretation placed on this passage. All who equate "this doctrine" with a partisan interpretation and dogmatically demand conformity to it are destructive of the peace of the one body and are the chief offenders against unity at the very time they quote the passage to exclude or excoriate others. The church of God has suffered indescribable harm from such prejudicial expositors who have split the disciples asunder under guise of loyalty to Jesus, and driven out humble saints by their arrogant and papistical decrees. Eternity alone can reveal the damage done to the body of Christ by the unscriptural and unscrupulous application of Romans 16:17. Sometimes an

example is worth a thousand words. Let us consider one way by which such harm is accomplished.

A humble brother in the Lord prayerfully peruses the sacred oracles and in his study becomes convinced that the Son of God will return to the earth prior to the thousand years spoken of in the Apocalypse. He shares his views with the brethren with whom he meets and learns that others as sincere as himself do not reach the same conclusion. They continue to meet together around the common table with mutual respect and regard for one another. Then a preacher comes into the community and learns that the brother has arrived at a premillennial interpretation which seems to him to best explain what the scriptures express concerning the return of the Lord. The preacher visits him with a view to "setting him straight on what the Bible teaches," but finds that the other insists upon being his own interpreter and refuses to abdicate his right to search the scriptures for himself.

The preacher then begins a series of lectures on "The Millennium" in which he has free rein to express his understanding of the subject without opposition. The other brother must merely sit and listen in silence. He cannot appear before the same audience and express his views. After having set forth his interpretation for several months from the pulpit and on his weekly radio program, the preacher informs the congregation that they have learned from him that the premillennial interpretation is not from God, and it is "time to take a stand for the truth."

He gleans occasional statements from individuals who have espoused the premillennial view, lifts them out of context and applies them to all who believe that Jesus will return before the thousand years. When the brother whom he opposes denies certain extremes he declares that all who adopt the premillennial view are cut from the same pattern and tarred with the same brush. He implies that all of these think more of their

premillennial view than of anything else and have more in common with "denominational premillennialists" than they do with "the Lord's church." He insists that one cannot be in the latter and disagree with the orthodox position on the millennial reign.

The trap is now set. The trigger is baited for "scandalizing" the body of Christ and destroying a brother for whom Christ died. But how can this brother be "set at nought"? The preacher informs the congregation that "the loyal churches" will cut them off if they "fellowship premillennialists." He declares that if they do not "put away such wicked persons" the time will come when they cannot even get a "faithful preacher" to conduct a funeral service for their dead. He calls for the congregation to "line up with the faithful brotherhood." Then Romans 16:17 is used as the stick with which to throw the trap. "Mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which you have learned and avoid them." Now a humble brother whose only sin is that of thinking for himself is hounded out along with those who refuse to bow their knees to despotism, and who regard no one as high priest except Christ Jesus.

Does someone insist that this description is exaggerated? I deny it! The truth is I am describing actual cases of which I have been aware. Who caused the offence, that is, baited the trap? Is it a crime for one to study the word of God for himself? Is it a crime to reach a conclusion from such a study? Is it a crime to retain a conviction until one is personally convinced that he is in error?

Who was at fault when the hierarchy demanded that Galileo, under threat of torture, retract his theory that the earth revolved around the sun? Was the position which obtained at that time— that no person had a right to hold an opinion without consent of the church— a correct one? Is that position correct now? I charge without hesitancy that those who make of

the church a mere party to uphold any millennial position as a test of fellowship are the ones who cause division.

A man may be in Christ and know nothing about the millennium. One can be in Christ and be mistaken about the millennium. He can be in Christ and interpret the scriptures from an amillennial or premillennial viewpoint. This does not mean both views are correct. It merely argues that being in Christ Jesus is not contingent upon either view. One is not in Christ because he is right about the millennium, but because he acknowledges Jesus as Lord over his life. It is absurd and asinine for people who trust in the Lord Jesus Christ to fall out over how and when he will come again. This is an event over which neither group can exercise control. It will occur in God's time and manner regardless of our ideas about it.

To form parties around our interpretation of unfulfilled prophecy and set at nought our brethren is sinful, scandalous and sensual. It shows we are babes in Christ, that we are yet carnal and walk as men. It reveals we are still partaking of the works of the flesh. We are stupid and short-sighted when we allow men to use us as partisan pawns about such matters and herd us into factional alignments.

My Position

The doctrine I have learned is that division in the family of God is contrary to the will of God. My Father does not want His children shivered into splinter groups or warring tribes. He loves all of His children as I love both of mine. For that reason I positively refuse to allow any man or group to put a party brand upon me which will separate or segregate me from any of my brethren. I shall keep an eye upon those who try to enlist me in their exclusive little segments and avoid them. I will keep out of their way when they try to get me to be a front man for their little cliques and clans.

I belong to Jesus Christ. He bought me with his blood and I do not intend to sell out to anyone else for anything less. No one can make me believe that I can best love God by mistreating His other children. The ones I shall mark and avoid are those who try to get me to mark and avoid all others outside of their little coteries and circles. I know they are factional and divisive. Their very attitude is contrary to all that Jesus came to accomplish.

It is true that I have learned a lot of other things which commend themselves to me as the doctrine of Christ but I do not intend to defend or denounce them. Having learned that doctrine that division is a sin, I shall mark and avoid all who create schisms and offences contrary to this doctrine. No man can be sound and sectarian at the same time. My aim is to save souls and lead men to Christ. It is not to increase or enlarge any party or faction as such. It is enough with me if the Lord adds men to the one body without me trying to entice them into some party or faction. I intend to stand fast in the freedom wherewith Christ set me free. And I shall defend for others the same freedom I demand for myself! I am not for sale!

I am sometimes asked if this will not create some problems for others in their attitude toward me. It will for those who are not free. Any free man in Christ is a problem for those who are factious. Every faction has to corral and brand all others and one who does not wear a party label of any kind presents a serious problem. The problem is not created by my freedom but by their factionalism. Let them become free and the problem will be solved. Let them tear down their corral fences and remove their artificial barriers and keep an eye on those who would build them up again and remain aloof from them and all of us can be happy in Jesus and with each other.

In the past, instead of marking those who are divisive, it was generally those who were divisive who did the marking, accompanying it with such cutting and slashing as rendered the body a spectacle of shame and disgrace to an unbelieving world.

It is time to stop this form of insanity which makes us bite and devour the body of which we are a part. Jesus died to make Christians— not cannibals!

The apostle describes the characters to be marked and avoided. "Such creatures are no servants of Christ our Lord, they are slaves of base desires; with their plausible and pious talk they beguile the hearts of unsuspecting people" (verse 18). Have we become so hardened against our brethren for whom Christ died that we regard those who differ with us about some point of trivia as "no servants of Jesus Christ our Lord but slaves of their base desires"? Are we so callous that we will thus brand God's children who honestly disagree with us about some method of propagating the gospel or caring for orphans and other needy? Are we so benumbed in spirit and frigid of heart that we conclude that every brother and sister who expects Jesus to come in advance of the millennium is "no servant of Jesus Christ our Lord"? Are we mere robots of steel, case-hardened and unfeeling, so that we can drive out from our midst every saint who testifies to a life-changing experience with the Holy Spirit?

If these do not fall into such a category as Paul describes, why do we twist and wrest this scripture as applicable to them? Have we been chloroformed by our own orthodoxy and paralyzed by partisan prejudice until we cannot see that to employ this passage to project division makes of us the aggressors and the ones to be marked and avoided? Why do factional promoters quote this verse and apply it to others? Is this the way to add brotherly kindness to godliness and love to brotherly kindness? Is this how we fulfill the admonition to speak not evil one of another? Is this the way to eliminate envying and strife and to overcome confusion and every evil work?

I know not what course others may take, but as for myself I have resolved never again to be brought into serfdom to any

man or made the slave of any machine. I shall steadfastly refuse to be made a cat's paw for any clan or a carrier pigeon for any party. I will be answerable to God for my thoughts and actions and will allow no one to control my thinking *down here* who cannot assume responsibility for it *up there*. If I must answer for it in heaven I shall reserve the right to do it for myself on earth. I can best face the head of the one body by cherishing and nourishing every other member attached unto him. I can best serve the Shepherd by associating with all of the sheep rather than by foraging with a few of them in the arrogance of isolation from the flock.

I shall value a brother in Christ Jesus more highly than I value what he thinks, knowing that the blood of Jesus makes him priceless even while his thoughts are imperfect. All of the brothers I have are "brothers in error." There are no other kind. Those who think they are not are in the worst error of all. But if they were good enough for God to accept they are not too bad for me to acknowledge. They can be my brothers on the same basis they are His children, and I will not stigmatize them as causing division when they are simply victims of it like the rest of us.

I am moved to conclude this chapter with a lengthy quotation from another source. It is my hope that you will not be deterred from reading it in its completeness despite its extended form. I have drawn it verbatim from *The Early Days of Christianity*, a volume of over 650 pages, written by Frederic W. Farrar, and published in 1884. In addition to being Chaplain in Ordinary to Queen Victoria, the author was also a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge; and Archdeacon and Canon of Westminster. The book was dedicated to Robert Browning, the poet, who was an esteemed friend of the author.

> **But unity does not exclude diversity— nay, more, without diversity there can be no true and perfect unity. Where there is no unity there is distraction, but where**

there is no diversity there is death. Where the spirits of the prophets are not subject to the prophets— where every man is conscious only of his own invisible consecration— where, as in the Church of Corinth, every one in his fanatical egotism is anxious to shout down the truths revealed to others, that he may absorb the attention of all by his own "tongue," however barbarous, however dissonant, however unintelligible— where it is ignored that amid the diversities of gifts and ministrations there is yet the translucent energy of one and the same Spirit— *there* is confusion, and railing, and irreligious strife.

And where, on the other hand, all lips mechanically repeat the same shibboleth for centuries after its significance has been worn away— where the dulness of a self-styled "orthodoxy" has obliterated the many hues of the wisdom of God— where enquiry is crushed under the heel of authority— where, in fact, there can be *no* independent enquiry because all conclusions are dictated beforehand by the tyranny of an usurped infallibility— *there* is uniformity indeed, but therewith corruption and decay.

When it is persecution to alter the perspective of a doctrine, and death to leave the cart-rut of a system— when they who question the misinterpretations of Scripture which have been pressed into the service of popular errors must face the anger of startled ignorance— when there is no life left to save the spark which glows in the ashes of the Martyr, or the lamp which flickers in the Reformer's cell— then the caste which has seized the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven may boast indeed of unity, but it is the unity produced by selfishness in the few, and serfdom in the many. The unity so secured is but the stagnancy of the unrippled water, the monotony of the barren sands. It is the unity of the dead plain, "where every molehill is a mountain, and every thistle a forest tree."

In this latter condition there is a deadlier peril than

in the former. Even discords can be inwrought into the vast sequences of some mighty harmony, but what great music can be achieved with but a single note? Unbroken unanimity may be the boast of a deadening Buddhism, a withered Confucianism, a mechanical Islam; it cannot exist in a free and living Christianity. If it exists at all, it can only be as a uniformity of indifference and ignorance — a uniformity of winter and of night. The uniformity of the noonday is only for the Infinite. For finite beings, if there be any light at all, there must be the colors of the sunset, and the sevenfold luster of the rainbow, which is only seen when there is rain as well as sun.

Withdraw Yourselves

Contents

The expression "withdraw fellowship" is not found in the sacred scriptures. This ought to give pause to those who claim to "speak where the Bible speaks, and remain silent where the Bible is silent." The word "fellowship" is our inadequate English translation of *koinonia*, a Greek term which means "to share a common life." The life which we share in common is eternal life. It dwells with the Father and was made visible to the apostles. One of them wrote, "What we have seen and heard we declare to you, so that you and we together may share in a common life, that life which we share with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ" (1 John 1:3. NEB).

No man or group of men can receive one into this fellowship. No man or group of men can withdraw it. The fellowship can neither be extended nor withdrawn by any being in the flesh. It can only be shared. Men cannot dispense eternal life, nor can they deny it. We are called into the fellowship of Jesus Christ by the Father Himself, and His fidelity is at stake in the call (1 Cor. 1:9). *The New English Version* aptly renders this, "It is God himself who called you to share in the life of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord; and God keeps faith."

In spite of this legalistic sects in our day continually engage in what they call "withdrawal of fellowship," and indulge in the heady notion that when they exclude an honest dissenter from their number the recording angel in heaven immediately expunges his name from the Lamb's book of life. Those who

regard the love letters indited by the apostles as a written code, transform themselves into God's executive board and law enforcement agency, and exercise the power of banishment, without realizing that their petty tyrannical action is given no recognition in heaven, except as a mark against them for such unloving and unbrotherly action.

Every sect is built upon fear, and fear breeds unwholesome attitudes. It promotes suspicion of any new concept and becomes agitated when confronted with dissent. It is an easily provable fact that it was the Roman hierarchy which took the word "heresy" and injected into it the idea that it consists of holding or expressing any view contrary to the orthodox, or official view of the church. The word "heresy" thus became a club to batter and bludgeon into unwilling compliance every original thinker. And the chief threat was excommunication, a word meaning, "out of the fellowship." Rome was the first legalistic sect, and the mother of all sects, and the spirit which she breathed gave life to other legalistic parties, even to those which challenged her claim to primacy.

Any religious group on earth which makes any opinion honestly held as a deduction gleaned from personal study of the sacred scriptures, a test of fellowship or a condition of union or communion, is suckling from the paps of "the hoary mother on the Tiber." Any group which excludes from its number a humble and non-factious brother simply because he differs in his thinking with "the official norm" is practicing on a minor scale the tactics of the Inquisition, and takes its place beside the persecutors of all ages.

Of course, those who make sincere dissent the ground for excommunication do not realize they are enforcing an unwritten creed, as damaging and destructive as all creeds invented to secure uniformity. Actually they assume they are being faithful to the word of God. But whatever a man must believe to be received and recognized by any group is the creed of that group.

Few factional groups realize that they search the scriptures to find some "heavenly" validation for their presuppositions, attitudes and actions, yet this is the accepted procedure of all sectarianism. In the case now under discussion, men with the sectarian spirit lifted an expression from its setting and wove around it an elaborate tissue of traditional dogma which had no relationship to its apostolic significance.

The instruction of Paul, as given in 2 Thessalonians 3:6, by the translators appointed by King James reads thus: "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which ye received of us." This is a statement appearing in a context, and if fairly interpreted must be interpreted within that context. To better understand how it has been abused let me specify a few things the context does not sanction or teach.

It does not teach "withdrawal of fellowship" by a congregation. It has nothing to do with a public corporate action. It says nothing about writing out charges and demanding a public acknowledgment of guilt. It is not even related to a mistaken view of some scriptural teaching or a deduction from the sacred oracles which may be wrong. In fact, the context gives to the term "disorderly" a specific application, and it has to do with daily conduct and behavior. It is not remotely related to an idea about scripture, whether right or wrong.

The problem is the age-old one of reading back into the apostolic letters modern ideas to justify our present practices. The remedy is to ignore what we "want to prove" and inaugurate an investigation of the conditions which called forth the letter. What situation at Thessalonica demanded correction and prompted the recommendation of the apostle? What did he actually say? What did he mean by what he said? What action did he expect the saints to take? It sounds well and good to raise these questions but it will not be easy to accomplish our purpose

in asking them because men are reluctant to admit they have been wrong. Even when forced to admit their application was unjustified they still want to salvage from it some crumb of comfort and save face.

The sincere student who seeks only truth will simply confess that he misunderstood a passage and was wrong about it. It will make no difference how long he taught his mistaken view or how many he influenced to accept it. I have absolutely no hesitancy in stating that I was in error on 2 Thessalonians 3:6 most of my past life. I used it as a basis for driving out from us men and women whose only "sin" was daring to think out loud. Many of the things they said then I accept now. They were ahead of me in many particulars. Unfortunately, I had "zeal, but not according to knowledge." I was wrong in spite of my sincerity. Let me share with you the things I learned which forced me to change.

Background Material

Thessalonica was a city of pride. Location, history and status all contributed to the feeling of self-gratification among the citizens. But some of it was false pride. It was empty and vacuous.

The hot springs gushing from the earth in numerous places gave the city its original name of Therma. The rivulets from these, emptying into the sea, came in contact with the colder water and created a cloud of vapor through which sailing ships appeared as argosies of the skies. It was for this reason the body of water was designated "the Thermaic Gulf." The harbor bustled with the activity created by vessels of lading from many ports.

It was Cassander who changed the name of the city. The son of Antipater he married the daughter of Philip of Macedon. The latter had won a great victory on the very day that a runner

brought him news of the birth of a baby girl. He returned word that she was to be called Thessalonica. After she married Cassander, he was assigned the task of slum clearance and modernization in the city which had not carted away the rubble of preceding wars. Not only did he alter the city, but changed its name to that of his wife. In honor of her he issued new coinage on which the form of "Victory" was imprinted. It was no dishonor for a city to bear the name of the sister of Alexander the Great.

In our own United States of America, Highway 66 (now Interstate 44) was long recognized as the chief arterial thoroughfare from coast to coast. Chambers of Commerce advertised their cities along this route with the slogan, "On the Main Street of America." There is some evidence that publicity groups for various municipalities functioned even in apostolic days. If so, the advertisers in Thessalonica could have adopted the phrase, "On the Main Street of the Empire." The famous *Via Egnatia*, the main artery through which life flowed from the heart of Rome to the remote extremities of the Asian world, passed directly through the center of Thessalonica. It was the largest and most influential city from Dyrrhachium to the Hellespont. Every pulse beat of the empire was felt as it surged through the political and economic veins of the district.

Most important is the fact that Thessalonica was a "free city." This cherished status was granted to but few places in the Greek world. Sometimes it was bestowed as a political gesture because of an illustrious past, as in the case of Athens. Again it was given as a reward for assistance to the armed forces of the empire in a period of crucial struggle, as in the case of Tarsus. This was true also of Thessalonica. After the assassination of Julius Caesar by the republican conspirators, a civil war began which culminated on the plains of the River Strymon, between Philippi and Thessalonica. These plains have been called "The Deathbed of the Roman Republic." Here the imperial forces led by Augustus and Mark Antony completely overwhelmed the

army led by Brutus and Cassius.

As a result, Philippi was made a military colony *(colonia)* **and Thessalonica a free city** *(urbs libera)***. There were four distinct privileges accorded a free city. (1) The citizens were self-governing and not subject to a district administrator appointed by Rome. They could determine their own form of government and were wholly responsible for its application. The local magistrates held the power of life and death over the citizenry, but were responsible for any outbreaks of violence. (2) No armed Roman guard was stationed in a free city and the citizens were not subjected to the sight of an occupational force. (3) No Roman insignia, either political or militaristic, could be displayed. This avoided the frequent revolts which occurred elsewhere when the hated symbols violated places held sacred by the populace. (4) In most cases freedom from taxation (***libertas cum immunitate***) was granted, and direct descendants of original families, as well as retired soldiers, were supported by the dole if they registered and requested it.**

If time and space permitted it would be a genuine privilege to show our readers how this background is woven into the very language in Acts describing Paul's encounter in the city, and how it also provides an understanding of many of the very phrases appearing in his two epistles to the Thessalonians. However, we must forego the pleasure to be derived from such a course in the interest of a more limited pursuit. We shall begin by investigating the general effect upon the inhabitants of a city of the declaration of *urbs libera***.**

Obviously the decree would eliminate a great deal of personal responsibility and provide much time for leisure. In a cultural environment like the one at Athens this afforded the average citizen opportunity for listening to the various philosophers, most of whom conducted their dialogues in the Forum, or marketplace. At Thessalonica, devoid as it was of such scholastic opportunities, the tendency was for many of the

men to degenerate into lazy and irresponsible louts and loungers, ready for any excitement which might be aroused to offset the monotony. This type of character is depicted in the references we have seen to the Thessalonians in the literature of the times, and the rabble might well be described in the words of Epimenides concerning the Cretans— "liars, vicious brutes, lazy gluttons" (Cp. Titus 1:12). This will explain what happened in Thessalonica as described by Luke.

> **But the Jews, in a fury of jealousy, got hold of some of the unprincipled loungers in the marketplace, gathered a crowd together, and set the city in an uproar. Then they attacked Jason's house in an attempt to bring Paul and Silas out before the people. When they could not find them they hustled Jason and some of the brothers before the civil authorities, shouting, "These are the men who have turned the world upside down and have now come here, and Jason has taken them into his house. What is more, all these men act against the decrees of Caesar, saying there is another king called Jesus!" By these words the Jews succeeded in alarming both the people and the authorities, and they only released Jason and others after binding them over to keep the peace.**

A congregation of saints exists within an environment and cannot be wholly disaffected by it. Those who compose it are also victims of their own past conditioning. This will serve to explain why Paul laid such emphasis upon the necessity of securing honest employment, holding it, and earning one's own livelihood. He did this in three ways.

1. By personal command while with the brethren. In his first epistle he directs them to "look after your own business, and to work with your hands, *as we commanded you*" (4:11). In his second epistle, he says, "For even during our stay with you we laid down the rule: the man who will not work shall not eat" (3:10).

2. By personal example in their midst. "Remember, brothers, how we toiled and drudged. We worked for a living night and day, rather than be a burden to anyone, while we proclaimed before you the good news of God" (2 Thess. 1:9). "You know yourselves how you ought to copy our example. We were no idlers among you; we did not accept board and lodging from anyone without paying for it; we toiled and drudged, we worked for a living night and day, rather than be a burden to any of you— not because we have not the right to maintenance, but to set an example for you to imitate" (2 Thess. 2:7-9).

3. By special admonition in both epistles. "Let it be your ambition to keep calm and look after your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we ordered you, so that you may command the respect of those outside your own number, and at the same time may never be in want" (1 Thess. 4:11,12).

These letters grew out of life situations. They were written to cover actual conditions. The favors for which they express thanks were real. The behavior which was commanded was genuine. The rebukes administered were not for imaginary wrongs. The corrections prescribed were not for fictitious ills. We can visualize the state of the brethren from that which was written to and about them. This fact lays a foundation of a scripture which has been wrested and contorted— 2 Thessalonians 3:6.

> *Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which ye received of us.*

On the basis of this passage honest dissenters have been hounded out of every faction and sect. Every disagreement with "the powers that be" and with those "who appear to be somewhat" has been labeled a disorderly walk and action has been taken to "withdraw fellowship." In my own days of factional adherence and bigotry, I misused the passage as

justification for refusal to recognize many of my brethren in the Lord Jesus. I was wrong! I am ashamed of the spirit of intolerance which I sought to excuse by this verse. I am also ashamed of the ignorance which prompted that spirit. I am convinced from unbiased research that what is commonly called "withdrawal of fellowship" is not countenanced in the verse and corporate action resulting in excommunication of a brother is not even a consideration in it.

The problem of interpretation centers around the meaning of "walking disorderly." The word for disorderly is *ataktos.* **It occurs in the form of an adverb twice (2 Thess. 3:6,11). It occurs in the verb form** *ataktein* **once (verse 7). When applied to the military it means "to break rank, to get out of step." When applied to another orderly arrangement such as a school or business, it means "to play truant." It has to do with a slack and irresponsible attitude. Dr. Barclay mentions its use in the papyri, "in an apprentice's contract in which the father agrees that his son must make good any days on which he absents himself from duty or plays truant."**

The context clearly shows that Paul used it to designate the idleness into which the brethren had drifted, or lapsed. Having reached the mistaken view that the return of Christ was imminent, they saw no further need for working. They gave up their jobs and decided to live off the other brethren, even prying into their personal affairs and becoming busybodies in other men's matters. Paul defines "disorderly" by showing both what it is and what it is not. In verse 11 he shows that it consists of "working not at all." In verses 7, 8, he demonstrates that he did not behave disorderly because he did not eat any man's food without paying for it, but supported himself by secular labor engaged in by day and by night.

To walk disorderly, in this context, is to live in idleness and sponge off of the other brethren. To read anything else into it is to ignore the setting entirely and twist the scriptures

capriciously and arbitrarily to fit a preconceived idea or notion. But what should be done to a person who simply will not get or keep a job and earn his own bread? The teaching is plain.

1. The brethren are commanded in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to "Withdraw yourselves from every brother who walketh disorderly," that is, who falls into idle habits. The *Revised Standard Version* **renders it, "Keep away from any brother who is living in idleness."** *Today's English Version* **says, "Keep away from all brothers who are living a lazy life."** *The Authentic Version reads*, **"Shun every brother who behaves as a shirker."** *Barclay* **translates, "Keep yourselves from every brother who behaves like a truant."** *The New English Bible* **has it, "Hold aloof from every Christian brother who falls into idle habits."**

There is not the slightest intimation of congregational or corporate action. It has no relationship to public or formal discipline. It is individual. No action is taken on the idle person. Nothing is done to him. He is simply left where he is while the brethren step back from him. To "withdraw yourselves" means to step back, to retreat, or to retire from the scene. Observe that the one from whom the brethren are to step back or hold themselves aloof is a *brother*, **although a lazy one who is living in idleness. Paul twice refers to the lazy individual as a brother.**

"Withdraw" is from *stello* **which means "to gather up." It was used for gathering up and binding one's loose outer garment to keep it from coming in contact with that which would soil or contaminate it. It was used for furling the sails of a ship to keep them from striking together and suffering damage. It is the term which would apply when a mother called her children into the house to protect them from threatened danger. It is easy to see how it came to mean, "to avoid, to hold aloof."**

The brethren in Thessalonica were simply commanded to refrain from extending hospitality to loafers and slackers. They

were not to feed them for the command was that "if any would not work neither should he eat" (verse 10). If one of these dawdling drones appeared at the front door just before mealtime he was to be offered a job instead of food. If he refused the former he was to be refused the latter. One who shunned honest toll was to be gently shunted from the table. It was just that simple.

2. The idle busybodies were commanded and exhorted to get a job. "That with quietness they work and eat their own bread." The term "busybody" is especially interesting since it is a play upon words. In the original it incorporates the word for "work." In verse 11 Paul uses the verb *ergazomai*, to work, and follows it with *periergazomai*, busy-bodies. Those who neglected their own work, which should have been central in their own lives were flitting and buzzing around telling others how to conduct their business. The prefix *peri* means "around" as in periscope or periphery. W. E. Vine says a free rendering of the passage would be, "Some who are not busied in their own business, but are overbusied in that of others."

"Quietness" is from *hesuchia*. It implies that tranquillity which arises from within and causes no disturbance of others. The Greeks had a different word for that serenity which proceeds from without but it would not have been as appropriate here. The idle brother was to secure a job and earn his own keep, without creating problems and complications for others in the congregation.

3. "And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed" (verse 14). "Note" is from *semeioo*, of which W. E. Vine says, "In the Middle Voice, to note for oneself and is so used in 2 Thess. 3:14, in an injunction to take cautionary note of one who refuses obedience to the Apostolic word by the Epistle." In the commentary in which Vine teams up with C. F. Hogg, there occurs this interesting observation, "continuous tense,

suggesting that no hasty conclusion was to be drawn from an act, but that the course and general conduct was to be observed."

The phrase "have no company with him" is intended to forbid the extending of hospitality. It would preclude invitations to social gatherings to which the idle might flock and at which they would eat at the expense of others. The word ashamed is from *entrepo*, and refers to a "wholesome shame which involves a change of attitude and conduct."

4. Although the offender is to be noted and hospitality refused while he persists in idleness, the record says, "Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother." Refusal to furnish food for such a person does not mean he is to be treated as a heathen. He is simply a lazy and indolent brother, who must be shunned to save him from his course. When a man cannot be reached through appeal to his heart he may have to be reached through appeal to his stomach. So long as his head is empty and his stomach is full little can be done.

It is almost impossible to imagine how the tangled maze of disciplinary action— boycott, excommunication, accusation, and congregational exclusivism— has grown out of this passage. We can only conclude that when men seek for justification for their sectarian attitudes they will find it. "Withdraw yourselves" provided the handy passage to satisfy their partisan needs because it contained the word "withdraw' and they swooped down and appropriated it as a new weapon in the arsenal of factionalism.

It would be humorous, were it not so serious, that the passage has been used to exclude people for almost every thought that has been expressed, but has never been used to deal with the problem which the apostle had in mind. I have never known of anyone being hailed before the congregation on the charge of laziness. Perhaps it is recognized that, in some places,

if idle habits were made a test of fellowship, there might not be enough persons remaining to even have meetings. Again, it has to be remembered that it may be that in most places the membership is too lazy to bring an accusation of laziness.

I suspect the King James Version is partially responsible for our condition and if some of the other versions had been used the brethren might have been saved the embarrassment of confessing their mistaken application. I suggest that those who are really concerned read the third chapter of the Second Thessalonian letter in *The New English New Testament***.**

Walking in the Light

Contents

> *But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin* **(1 John 1:7).**

No discussion of fellowship can ignore this statement. It is apparent that the fellowship mentioned is conditioned upon "walking in the light" and doing so to the extent that God is in the light. But what is the light? What is darkness? What is it to "walk in the light"? An objective analysis of this passage and a proper answer to these questions produces a real surprise to partisan defenders who have merely accepted a traditional explanation without study or investigation.

It is not my intention at present to outline at length the background of this epistle. That belongs more appropriately to the next chapter and my discussion of the implications of 2 John 10, 11. It will suffice now to say that at the time of this writing, the last survivor of the apostles was living in Ephesus. Here he came into direct contact with the sect of the Gnostics who had infiltrated and disturbed every congregation in the Greek world. These philosophic cultists pretended to special insights and claimed to have knowledge of the mystical and elemental structure of the universe. They took their title from *gnosis*, knowledge. They were the "knowing ones," those on the inside, as opposed to the uninitiated.

Although there were various schools of gnostic thought, all

were basically agreed upon the idea underlying their synthetic philosophy, that all matter is essentially evil. On this basis they concluded that God could not have personally and directly created the world because He could have no contact or relationship with evil. By the same token they concluded that Jesus was either a phantom, or that he was born of a union of Joseph and Mary and elevated to Sonship with God at his baptism by John. Under the leadership of Cerinthus and other advocates of that day, this philosophy wormed its way into every congregation in Asia Minor. Wherever it went it destroyed the faith of many in the fact that Jesus had come in the flesh.

Prevalent in the theory was the idea that there could be no possible union between the human and the divine. The former was material, and therefore, evil; and the possibility of fellowship between them was regarded as absurd and ridiculous. God was so far outside of and above the universe which had been created by a demiurge, one of a series of emanations which had gone out from the divine essence, that He was wholly unconcerned about anything on earth and completely without interest in mankind. There could be no direct bridging of the chasm between deity and humanity, and from this stemmed two conclusions. Jesus was not deity manifested in a body of flesh and there was no such thing as a stage of fellowship between God and man. There was no *koinonia*, no sharing of a common life.

John counters this theory with his gospel record. This will account for the difference between it and the "synoptics." This term is applied to Matthew, Mark and Luke, because their contents can be charted in parallel columns and synchronized. A synopsis can be made which will be true to all three. The gospel according to John does not lend itself to such treatment. It was written for a distinctive purpose and to meet a wholly different need. The first two epistles of John were written for the same purpose. Both specifically deal with the treatment to be accorded to those who "deny that Jesus is the Christ" (1 John 2:22), that

is, "that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh" (2 John 7).

An analysis of 1 John in the light of its background and the circumstances which called it forth, is one of the most rewarding experiences which can come to the dedicated Bible student. John begins by affirming that eternal life, which was with God from the beginning, was manifested and made visible unto men, and that he was one of the selected witnesses who beheld that life embodied in a person and could testify to it. "We have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life." Since eternal life was with the Father from the beginning, and was not merely extension of time, but possessed the quality of personality, the pre-existence of the "Word of life" was thus asserted.

Nature of the Testimony

The fact that prior to the manifestation, the Word was in a different state, does not argue against existence. It serves only to demonstrate that the incarnation revealed to human eyes what previously had been hidden from them. Once accepted, this would deal a blow to elemental gnosticism. But there was a group of gnostics called the Docetics, from *dokeo*, to appear, to seem. These alleged that Jesus possessed no reality, and that he was immaterial, and a phantom (or phantasy). For their benefit the apostle shows that the Word not only became flesh, but was actually subject to examination by the senses.

He argues against the possibility of the witnesses being deceived or deluded upon the basis of their intimate personal association with the embodied Word. From the standpoint of time, proximity, and conscious interest, they had ample opportunity to examine the validity of His claims. They were with Him long enough and were associated with Him closely enough that they could not be misled. Their own careers and very lives were staked upon His veracity. They had left all and

followed Him.

Their examination of eternal life personified in the flesh was audible, visual and manual. "We have heard, we have seen with our eyes, we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life." The best proof is visual, and this is stressed. Not only did they see Jesus with their eyes, but they looked upon him. This has to do with studied investigation or prolonged scrutiny. Theirs was no mere passing glance. They did not simply *look at* Jesus, but they *looked upon* him. They knew He was not a phantom. They touched Him and handled Him. The apostles were qualified witnesses. Their testimony met all of the requirements essential to proving a point of fact.

Their experience with the manifested Word made possible a fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. Eternal life became incarnate in Jesus, and when Jesus took up his abode in them, eternal life became incarnate with them. "This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life" (1 John 5:11,12). When the Word of life became embodied, that Word was designated the Son of God. When eternal life dwells in us we are also called sons of God. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God" (3 :1).

The declaration of what the apostolic witnesses had seen and heard was to make possible the extension of the divine human fellowship unto their hearers and thus provide for them fulness of joy. The essence of the message which had been conveyed unto them by God, and which they, in turn, conveyed to others, was summed up in the words, "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." Since the declaration was to assure fellowship of the human with the divine, and since it consisted of the statement that God is light in the absolute, it is obvious that nothing can be of greater importance than identification of the light. Fellowship with God is conditioned upon walking in that

light.

Fellowship is not by word but by walk. It is not the testimony of the lips but of the life. The word "walk" means more than merely making progress in a given direction, or of placing each foot alternately before the other. It involves experience and sharing of thought and life. "And Enoch walked with God, and he was not (found) for God took him" (Genesis 5:24). "Noah was a just man, and perfect in his generation, and Noah walked with God" (Genesis 6:9). Inasmuch as God is light, to say that one is in fellowship with God while walking in darkness is to lie and do not the truth. Darkness is the opposite to light.

Identifying the Light

> *But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*

What is the light? In this context the light is what God is, for God is light. The word "light" is used as a symbol for various qualities or things in the inspired scriptures. Sometimes it is used for divine revelation, and the unrevealed, the mysterious, is darkness. Sometimes it is used for reverence of the living God, and idolatry is darkness. More frequently it is used for knowledge, and ignorance is darkness. Only by studying the frame of reference in which the term is employed can one be certain of its meaning.

In this connection, we can eliminate from consideration anything which it is not possible for man to possess in the same degree as God, that is, in an absolute or perfect degree. "God is light and in him is no darkness at all . . . If we walk in the light *as he is in the light***." This immediately excludes knowledge of God's will from consideration. It is obvious that none of us can have the same degree of mental perception as God. The finite**

mind cannot embrace the scope of the infinite. To walk in the light cannot mean either to perfectly understand God's will or to perfectly do it. This would require something we do not have in the flesh.

Fortunately, we can determine from this brief epistle what light is, as John uses the word. ***Light is love*****. It is not, however, affection, sentiment or passion. The love of which John speaks is** ***agape*****, the love which God had for us which prompted him to send Jesus to die for us in our unworthiness. It is that active and energetic good will which stops at nothing to achieve the good of the beloved object. It must be expressed. It can never be passive. It is apprehended in its demonstration which is always outreaching and outgoing. "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us" (3:16). It is this in which we must walk. This is the light and Jesus was light embodied.**

Light is love and since the opposite of light is darkness, the darkness must be hate. Once this is grasped every sentence in the epistle falls into place like the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle and a beautiful picture results. Let us proceed with the proof of our assertion. To abide in the light is to love the brethren. "He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him" (2:10). If this is correct, hatred for the brethren will be darkness. "He that saith he is in the light and hateth his brother is in darkness even until now" (2:9). This last is the equivalent of saying, "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie" (1:6). "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar" (4:20).

It may be urged that the completing phrase of verse 6 is "do not the truth." This is correct for if we walk in darkness "we lie and do not the truth." But it is by brotherly love that we know we are of the truth. "And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him" (3:19). To the Greeks, truth was the reality which was at the basis of all appearance. It was the ideal which was behind every semblance.

It was the genuine. John is saying that those who are "in the truth" are obligated to walk according to it, and the reality behind God's whole purpose is love. If we say that we share in the divine nature (have fellowship with God), and walk in darkness (hate our brethren), we lie and do not the truth (miss the reality underlying the whole Christian structure).

Personification of Love

On what premise can we conclude that John introduces the theme of love in conjunction with his affirmation that the Word of life was manifested in a visible person? The answer is simply that it was the love of God which made eternal life manifest unto us. Because he loved us thus, we ought also to love one another. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him" (4:9). "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (3:16). "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another" (4:11).

The Son of God was God manifest in the flesh, reconciling the world unto himself. But that which was manifested was the Word of life which was with God in the beginning, and which was also God. But that light which was manifested was eternal life (1:2). It was this Word of life personalized which constituted the basis of the apostolic message. "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you." Eternal life is not extension of time but expression of love! Read the following carefully. "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light" (1:5). "For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another" (3:11). "This is the message God is light." "This is the message . . . that we should love." There are not two messages. There is simply *the message*. It defines the nature of God and outlines the expression of that nature in those who are his sons.

And if it be true that light is love, it must follow that, if God is light, God is love. On this the record is positive. "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him" (4:16). "He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love" (4:8). To the serious student nothing else should be necessary to identify the light. When a writer says, "God is light," and in the very same letter twice explains what he means by saying, "God is love," it should require little intellectual ability to determine that in the context of that writer, *light is love***.**

Perfection of Love

We come now to the chief intellectual hurdle and the greatest challenge to the scholarly mind. If light is love, does this not imply that we must possess love in the absolute? Must we not have love in a perfect degree? Whatever light is, we must experience it, that is, walk in it to the same degree as it is manifested in God. "If we walk in the light as he is in the light." That this is absolute is proven by the statement that "God is light and in him is no darkness at all." If we walk in the light as he is in the light there can be none of the opposite effect in us.

We have already eliminated knowledge from consideration as the light because all of us are ignorant in some degree, of the will of God. No one knows as much as God. To assume that light is knowledge of God's will and that darkness is ignorance of it, is simply to make us liars. We would then have to read, "If we say that we have fellowship with him and are ignorant of any part of the divine will, we lie and do not the truth. But if our knowledge is absolute and perfect, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." No sane reasoner would want to hinge his hope of being cleansed from sin upon knowing as much as God knows.

But do we not face the same problem if we regard light as

being love? Can we love as God loves? Can we walk in *this* light as God is in the light? I unhesitatingly affirm that we can. This was the very purpose of John's epistle. It was written to tell us why and how we must do so. The thing that disturbs many is that they regard love as something to be achieved rather than something to be experienced. But no one achieves light. It is a creation of God, a blessing to be bestowed and enjoyed. And that love which is equivalent to light is not something to be attained by human striving. It is a gift of God. It is a commitment unto us of the divine nature. "Love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God" (4:7).

When the love of God was personalized in Jesus, God revealed the possibility of incarnating the divine nature. That nature had always existed but was never expressed before as it was in Christ. "In him the whole fulness of deity dwells bodily" (Col. 2:9). In him the world could see love manifested. The nature possessed by God could now be incorporate in man, for true love was now available. "A new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth" (2:8). The true love was now reality in flesh.

The love that God requires He supplies. It is a fruit of the Spirit. It is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us of God (Romans 5:5). It did not originate with man but with God. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us" (1 John 4:10). "We love because he first loved us" (4:19). When God dwells in us His love is perfected in us (4:12). "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love: and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world" (4:16,17). Our love is made perfect! And as he is, so are we— and in this world!

This does not minimize our responsibility. It does not mean

the human factor is eliminated. The provision of love is God's part; the expression of it is our part. God never forces us to act contrary to our will. It is His will to make love ours, it is our to will to love others, and to be like Him. This is proven by the fact that sometimes love is regarded as light which man cannot create, while at the same time man is commanded to walk in that light, that is, to exercise it in his own life. A man can love his brother or he can hate him. The manifestation of love is contingent upon the will of the individual, but one who is completely surrendered and committed to God will spontaneously and naturally walk in love. The secret is the surrender of the will absolutely to God so that the divine nature is incarnated in us as it was in Jesus. The Word must become flesh in us!

Loving Our Brothers

God is light. God is love. One who walked in love walks in light. One who dwells in love dwells in God. God dwells in such a person, so he is in the light and the light is in him. "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him" (4:16). It is as we love our brothers that we walk in light and move out of darkness— the darkness of hate and animosity. Let us note the things affirmed of such love.

1. To love the brethren is to abide in the light (2:10). The word "abide" is not the word for a temporary dwelling. It is not used of transients who merely stay overnight. It is not a motel enroute, but home. The light is the fixed residence of those who love the brethren. They do not merely pass through the light on their way from one area of darkness to another.

2. Love for the brethren is one of the two distinctive marks of sonship with God. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God" (3:1). "In this the children of God are manifest and the

children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother" (3:10).

3. Love for the brethren is a waymark to identify the area into which we have come as that of life. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren" (3:14). The expression used here has to do with crossing a frontier. It was used of those returning from an alien country to their native land. When one is able to love the brethren unreservedly, because they are brethren, and not upon other conditions, he can know that he has left the territory where death reigns. He no longer breathes the noxious fumes of hate, he is in a purer atmosphere. He does not wade through the murky swamps of animosity. His feet are on solid ground.

4. Love for the brethren is a criterion by which we can determine if we are of the truth. It is useless to contend we are of the truth when we do not love our brethren. We can memorize the scriptures and be able to quote whole chapters but this does not demonstrate we are of the truth. "And hereby we know we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him" (3:19).

5. Love manifested toward brethren enables God to dwell in us, that is to be in fellowship with us. As we love, the divine love is perfected in us. We must love as God loved. His love was not conditioned upon our sinlessness, our perfection in knowledge, or our freedom from error. The love of God is different from all other forms of love. Love which is composed of sentiment, affection or emotion, is extended to those who are deemed worthy. The love of God creates the worth in itself. The first loves those who are precious, the others are precious because they are loved.

When we tolerate or endure those who disagree with us and love those who do not, we are no better than the despised and outcast publicans (Matt. 5:46). They loved those who reciprocated in kind. Theirs was the mutual sharing of misery.

Our love is to be creative and outgoing. It expends itself because only in so doing can it live. In loving we see God in our own hearts. "No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another God dwells in us, and his love is perfected in us" (4:12).

6. When we are partners in Brotherly Love, Unlimited, we are freed from all torment of fear. This is not true of those who are restrained and restricted by a legalistic concept of the Way. All who seek to live by law, or love by law, will spend their time on earth "bound in shallows and in miseries." Who knows if he has learned all he could learn, done all he could do, or climbed as high as he could by exertion of his own power or ability? There will always be doubt and suspicion, fear and distrust, under such a system. God changed the world by turning love loose. When we do the same we lose all fear of men on earth and of judgment after death. The secret to the carefree life is love unbounded. "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment . . . . There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear; because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love" (4:17,18). Notice that it is only perfect love that can cast out fear. Imperfect love is always frightened and fearful.

Hating Our Brothers

In the context love is a positive, active, energetic and energizing force. It is creative. But hate is negative. Because of its nature love must express itself in positive fashion, but hate need not do so. It can be simply lack of love. Man was made with the ability to love and thus to be like God, who is love. When he fails in this respect he does not cross the frontier. One must do something to leave where he is but he need not do anything to stay where he is. Not to love is to hate! This thesis would be incomplete if we showed the nature of love without studying the nature and results of hate.

1. Hatred for brethren (that is, lack of love) leaves one in darkness. Regardless of how one may assert he is in the light, if he does not love, he lies. "He that saith he is in the light and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now" (2:9). Darkness is simply absence of light. God did not create darkness. He created light.

2. Hatred of our brethren blinds us and makes true perception impossible. No man can ever grasp the import of God's revelation until he loves his brethren as God loves them. To assert that one sees the truth while hating his brothers is like a blind man claiming to view the beauties of nature. "But he that hateth his brother is in darkness and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because the darkness hath blinded his eyes" (2:11).

3. Lack of love for the brethren is proof of the fatherhood of Satan in our lives. The realm of hatred is presided over by "the prince of the power of the air." Those who operate in the area of hatred and animosity are on the devil's territory. It is useless to affirm we are sons of God if we do not love God's other sons. "In this the children of God are manifested and the children of the devil" (3:10).

4. Those who do not love the brethren are still in the domain of death. They dwell like lepers in putrid sepulchers, and like the evil spirits of old "abide in the tombs." It is by love that we cross the frontier from death unto life. He who has not learned to love has not learned to live (3:14).

5. One who hates his brother is a murderer. Under the regime of Christ, thought and intent may be taken for the act. Jesus pointed out that those in olden times said, "Thou shalt not kill" but now to be angry against a brother without cause, or to slander or falsely accuse him, might result in losing one's soul. One who hates lacks only the opportunity to do violence to a brother who is the object of his wrath and spite.

6. One who does not love does not know God. He may know about God and be able to catalogue the attributes of deity. But there is a difference in the ability to identify a person and in being identified with him. It is one thing to describe another; a wholly different thing to abide in Him. "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love" (1 John 4:8).

The Fallacy of Orthodoxy

It was my lot to grow up in a religious movement which had its inception in a sincere attempt to "unite the Christians in all of the sects." It proposed to accomplish this by the very simple expedient of renouncing all formal creeds and ignoring the sects which they had spawned and returning to the original pattern as depicted in the apostolic writings. To assure success in restoring the ancient order the slogan was adopted, "We speak where the Bible speaks, and remain silent where the Bible is silent."

Unfortunately for such historic efforts, the noble men who conceive them grow old and die, and are succeeded by others who retain the idea without the ideals or character. In order to preserve the gains that have been made, intellectual walls are erected, and soon the very spirit of freedom which gave rise to the effort is proscribed. The love letters of the apostles are converted into a law to be enforced, the movement itself becomes "the Lord's church," and the traditional legalistic interpretations become hallowed precepts, so that "the System" which evolves is confused with the will of God and "the scheme of redemption."

In such a project fear makes all dissent heresy and regards every divergent opinion as a threat. One who thinks becomes a danger and must either be "brought into line" or driven out. Every scripture is commandeered to man the ramparts of orthodoxy and even though it may be wrested from the

contextual soil in which it was planted by the Holy Spirit, it will be used as a bludgeon to ward off attacks upon "the System." I have no hesitancy in asserting this is exactly what has happened in connection with 1 John 1:7.

It cannot be denied that the average preacher of "The Church of Christ" regards the light of which John speaks as his own creedal interpretation of the new covenant scriptures! To "walk in the light" is to live up to the traditional factional explanation of the party of which he is a member. To "walk in darkness" is to deviate in some particular, especially that of the special party emphasis, from the unwritten creed. Each party thinks it alone is in the light and all of the others are in darkness. Since "fellowship one with another" is conditioned upon "walking in the light," and since the light is the legalistic code of the faction, fellowship is regarded as ordained of God to be limited to fellow-partisans.

It would be a matter of compassion if only the ignorant and the unlearned were victims of such philosophy, but it becomes tragic when it is realized that this type of exposition is advocated by editors and journalists who have a reputation in their parties. It is even advanced by college professors responsible for teaching the younger saints. The situation would be regrettable if such teaching was given without intent to unduly influence others; it is even more so when it is done with the deliberate design of maintaining division in the family of God, and keeping apart those who would recognize each other as brethren. When the humbler believers indicate a desire to exhibit love for those on the other side of a partisan wall they are discouraged by misapplication of the statement, "If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another." Actually the revised factional version should read, "If *they* will walk in our light as we are in that light, we will have fellowship with them."

The apostle John wrote in a time of crisis to stimulate

believers in the Word of life and to encourage fellowship in love. His letter is a majestic treatise on brotherly love, unsurpassed in the whole realm of literature. In spite of this, men under guise of loyalty to Jesus single out a passage and interpret it in such a manner as to make fellowship impossible and to render every claim of the epistle upon our better selves null and void.

I deny that the light in this instance is a written code. God is light but He is not a written code. Not a letter that John wrote was either life or light. If the third epistle was either one, the apostle deliberately withheld life and light from the beloved Gaius, for he declared, "I had many things to write, but I will not with pen and ink write to thee." If the second epistle was to be life or light, it was imperfect, for John wrote. "Having many things to write unto you, I would not write with paper and ink." That the first letter was not intended to convey life is evident. "These things have I written unto you that believe on the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life" (5:13). Eternal life is not having a copy of the Bible, but having the Son of God. "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life" (5:12).

Where is the congregation of believers which will brazenly affirm that it is composed only of those who know as much about God's will and purpose as God Himself? If the light in which we must walk to have fellowship, is knowledge of God's revelation, we must be either as perfect in knowledge as God or we cannot be in the fellowship. "If we walk in the light *as he is in the light,* **we have fellowship one with another." God is light and in him is no darkness at all." If darkness is ignorance we cannot be ignorant of anything in the universe. We must know all there is to know, and be as wise as God, or else we walk in darkness. If we say we have fellowship with Him and walk in darkness— if we are ignorant about anything— we lie and do not the truth.**

The absurdity of this lies in the fact that, on the basis of this philosophy, we will have to baptize people in the morning

and exclude them from our number in the afternoon, for if they do not come to a perfect knowledge as soon as they are baptized they are walking in darkness. If the champions of orthodoxy say that we must allow them time to learn, then we ask how long they may walk in darkness and still be accepted? How much of the Bible must one be able to grasp perfectly before he is walking in darkness? How much of it can he misunderstand and still walk in the light?

It is time to quit playing around with such puerile proponents of partisan positions. Where is the preacher who quotes this passage to debar humble saints and discourage an expression of fellowship among brethren, who will dare to affirm that he is as wise as God and as good as God? If he dare not say that he is, by his own admission he is not in the fellowship. Like Haman, he is hanged on the fatal gallows which he constructed to destroy others. I consider the traditional orthodox interpretation placed upon 1 John 1:7 as one of the most dangerous ever palmed off on unsuspecting men and women. It is subversive of the Spirit and a scandal to the church of God. It dooms the body to disintegration and can only damn us all to destruction if we embrace it.

Let us recapture the valid meaning of this warped and wrested passage and use it to promote fellowship, and not pervert it. God is light. God is love. If we walk in the light we walk in God. If we walk in love we abide in God. If we love our brothers we abide in the light. You cannot separate light and love. Neither can you separate those who truly love one another. We quit living together when we quit loving each other. The road to togetherness is the path of love. "And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also" (1 John 4:21). When we heed this command, and only then, can it be said "As he is, so are we," and it can be added— in this world."

Let him who aspires to be like God begin by asserting his

love for the brethren, all of them. Let him love those who agree with him, and let him love those who do not. Let him place love on a higher plane than that of mere reciprocity such as the pagans exhibit. He who shares love shares God, and he who shares God shares life. Certainly we should share ideas and concepts, but more than anything else, we should share the love that is light and life!

Receive Him Not

Contents

> *If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed; For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds* **(2 John 10,11).**

This is one of the more prominent "twisted scriptures." It has become the handle for every factional tool used to pry apart the living stones in the temple of God. It is the murderous knife employed to dismember the body of the Lord. It was written by the apostle of love to protect the flock of God from the prowling wolves who sought to seduce them through denial of the foundational fact that Jesus came in the flesh. It is now used to convert the sheep into snarling dogs, snapping at each other over every stray scrap of doctrine. It has substituted the law of the pack for the love of the flock.

No other passage so well illustrates the danger of ignoring the context. That the leaders of religious thought in some sects should have been betrayed into adopting an interpretation which makes unity impossible and renders ridiculous their vaunted claim to respect for the authority of the word of God, is one of the amazing developments in the restoration movement of which we are heirs. Any use of the written word which makes impossible the fulfillment and realization of the prayer and purpose of the Living Word is abuse and misuse. We can never regain our integrity as scholars until we repudiate the partisan explanation which makes every vagary of thought and dissent an

occasion to destroy the fraternal relationship created by the blood of Jesus, and stab love dead at our feet.

What is "the doctrine" which is so transcendent that one who does not attest to it must not be allowed to enter the house, nor be given a greeting on the street or in the marketplace? Or, looking at it from the opposite position, what is it that, when advocated is so heinous and so poison to the fellowship, that to merely salute its opponent is to make one a participant in his vicious works? To this question a medley of things is contributed by factional voices. Every trivial idea which has been magnified out of all proportion to its value and worth is exalted to the status of the doctrine which is to preclude hospitality and make all greeting a violation of the Word of God. So ludicrous are some of these that it serves no good purpose to even mention them.

The depth of one's love for the family of God can be determined by the relative value of those things which will cause one to sacrifice it or to break up the relationship. The triviality of those views elevated to a higher station than the family ties created by the blood of the cross is indicative of the shallowness and superficiality of thought eating like a pernicious cancer at the heart of a wonderful fellowship created by God and inaugurated by the indwelling Spirit.

Who can believe that the apostle who wrote more about brotherly love than any other man, would recommend that we refuse entrance to our homes to those saints who disagree with us over some of the things about which we debate? What sane reasoner can actually conclude that to greet a brother who disagrees with us about these matters is to become a participant in some "evil deed"? The very absurdity of such a conclusion renders obnoxious the common usage of the passage by expositors who should know better.

I do not hesitate to say that so long as men maintain such

an unrealistic attitude toward the sacred scriptures they can never make an impact upon the thinking world. They will only be purveyors of prejudice, agents of animosity, and disseminators of distrust. Such explanations are exercises in eisegetics, not exegetics. They inject a meaning into the holy oracles rather than extracting one from them. And while there was a time when dogmatism held men and women in line because the masses could neither read nor write, that day is over. We face another "Great Awakening" in the religious realm. Enlightened people are growing less satisfied with the dry husks thrown out to them by factional debaters.

To what did John refer by "this doctrine"? Who were the wandering teachers who were to be refused entrance when they applied for hospitality? What condition existed at the time which made it imperative that the "elect lady and her children" refrain from giving a greeting to certain teachers? Who were those who "went beyond" and did not remain in the doctrine of Christ? Surely what they denied must have been related to the very fundamental and essential facts upon which the faith was predicated to require such drastic measures to preserve it inviolate.

General Observations

Every reputable scholar known to us believes that John was writing to counteract the pernicious effects of Gnosticism. Upon no other ground can we account for the approach of his gospel record and first two epistles. Who were the Gnostics? What did they teach? Why were they so dangerous to the Christian concept? How did John become involved in the controversy? It is not our purpose here to analyze this synthetic philosophy, interesting though it might be. We shall be content with supplying our readers with sufficient background material to enable them to see the purpose and intent of John and to recognize how modern "interpreters" among us have warped

and wrested what the apostle wrote. For your own convenience and to aid the reviewers of what I write I will number the various observations.

1. The word "gnostic" is from *gnosis*, knowledge. The Gnostics were "the knowing ones." It was believed by the Gnostics that all matter was inherently evil and only spirit was good. Since the spirit was imprisoned in the body, and the body composed of matter, the chief aim was to free or liberate the spirit. Taking their cue from the Greek mystery religions they taught that only by probing the depths and ascending the heights of knowledge, could that which was real be delivered from the material. This required an elaborate secret ritual coupled with painful, arduous and disciplined investigation and research into the mystical infinite wisdom of God. All men were not equipped to do this, either from lack of time, inclination or ability, and the majority of these would continue on a more animal plane. The Gnostics were in a class by themselves. They were the initiated. They could "go beyond."

2. This idea of a spiritual aristocracy made up of specially endowed thinkers who were on "the inside" would wreak havoc upon the idea of fellowship. For this reason John emphasizes over and over that all saints have access to knowledge. They all possess it. The word "know" appears in various forms eleven times in chapter two of the first epistle. "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and *ye know* all things" (2:20). "I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth but because *ye know it*" (2:21). The one who doesn't know where he is going is the one who hates his brother (2:11). In chapter three "know" is found 8 times, in chapter four 7 times, and in chapter five 7 times. In every instance the disciples are comforted with the thought that knowledge is not the special privilege of the few. Note the recurrence of "we know" and "ye know."

3. The Gnostics held that matter was evil. On this basis they speculated that God could not have created the earth

because it was material. By the same token the idea of the incarnation was unthinkable. One group held that Jesus was simply an ethereal person, a mere phantom. They insisted he never had a real flesh and blood body, that he was pure spirit. These were called Docetics, from *dokeo*, to appear, to seem. John attacked this speculation by affirming that the apostles had heard, seen, scrutinized, and handled Jesus with their hands.

4. Cerinthus was the first Gnostic leader whose name has come down to us. He lived in Ephesus where John apparently wrote his epistles. According to Eusebius, the father of church historians, John knew Cerinthus for what he really was. Cerinthus made a distinction between Jesus and the Christ, or Logos. He taught that Jesus was human, the son of Joseph and Mary. But Jesus increased in wisdom and favor with God, which He could not have done if He had been God, according to Cerinthus. (See Luke 2:52). When Jesus was thirty years of age, He had lived in such a state of purity that God adopted Him, publicly announcing that Jesus was His Son in whom He was well pleased. Upon this occasion the Christ (anointing) descended upon Him in the shape of a dove. Cerinthus reasoned that Jesus could not have been God prior to this as He did not have the Spirit of God until it descended upon Him. The Christ came upon him at John's baptism.

He further contended that the Christ (Spirit) could not be killed or made to suffer pain. The human Jesus was nailed to the cross and endured agony but the Christ had withdrawn as He came, and was beyond the reach of men. It is for this reason John insists that, "This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood" (1 John 5:6). It was not just Jesus who came to be baptized but Jesus Christ; it was not just Jesus who was crucified but Jesus Christ. He did not come by water (baptism) only, but by water and blood (crucifixion).

5. The crux of the whole matter as it affected Christian

faith lay simply in the fact that a Gnostic could not believe in the incarnation. It was impossible for such a person to admit that the pre-existent Logos was made flesh. This provided a real test. If one, upon being asked, "Do you believe that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh?" answered in the affirmative, you could be sure he was motivated by the Spirit of God. If he denied or hedged, as the record says, "Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist" (1 John 4:1-3).

Specific Observations

Having given this meager outline of Gnostic philosophy we turn to consideration of the cult of Gnostics against whom John sought to protect the saints. Let us list some of the things about them which we can learn from his writings.

1. We know that these men pretended to have access to a source of knowledge which made them superior in wisdom to the average member of the body. It was their aim to make the Way intellectually acceptable to the philosophic schools by expressing their concepts of Christ in the language of Oriental mysticism. They belonged to an arrogant group of Philosophic aristocrats who claimed to have the ability to *go beyond* **and penetrate the veil of true learning. The idea that Jesus had come in the flesh was but spiritual pap for infantile mentalities but could not be countenanced by the advanced reasoner. John declared that the true** *gnosis* **was the apostolic testimony and the test of** *knowledge* **of God was willingness to receive that testimony. "We are of God; he that** *knoweth* **God heareth us: he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby** *know* **we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error" (1 John 4:6).**

2. We know the Gnostics were respected and received by many and that they were numerous. They were regarded as possessing visionary insight and revelatory power because they

were accepted as prophets. For this reason the apostle cautioned the saints to test the spirits "because many false prophets have gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1). John labels them antichrists, and says, "Even now there are many antichrists."

3. We know these men were traveling from place to place as did many of the philosophers and teachers in the Greek world and they no doubt depended upon the homes they contacted in each community to extend them hospitality. Any such home would then be used as a base for their efforts. It is significant that John says, "Many false prophets are *gone out into the world***." The false prophets were doing what Jesus commissioned the apostles to do.**

4. We know that the Gnostics were separatists and schismatics and that they abandoned the body of saints to create a sect of their own. The unity of the body is based upon acknowledgement of the great fact that Jesus is the Christ. When men no longer are willing to accept this foundation upon which the community of heaven was planted they become antichrists. "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us" (1 John 2:19). It is interesting that, in this context, John shows the one creed which can bind us together, repudiation of which will fragment us. "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son" (2:22). So long as one accepts fully the fact that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, he remains upon the foundation upon which Jesus said he would construct his community. When he forsakes that foundation he forsakes all that is Christian.

5. We know that even though the Gnostics withdrew they still sought to influence those who allowed that which they had heard from the beginning to remain in them, and continued in the Son and in the Father (2:24). These false apostles were proselytizers. Under the guise of teaching advanced truth they wormed themselves into any home which would receive them,

and led those who dwelt there to deny that Jesus was the Christ. It was to warn against such teachers that John wrote, "These things have I written to you concerning them that seduce you" (2:26).

The reply of those who were solicited by these "advanced thinkers" was to be simply that they did not need any man to teach them, but having been anointed by the Holy Spirit they had access to all truth, and that truth was always consistent. The additional truth must be measured by what they had formerly been taught by the apostles. "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him" (3:27). Those who were taught by the Spirit would abide in Christ, that is, in what they had been taught by the anointing. The Gnostics "went beyond and abode not in the doctrine of Christ" (2 John 9).

All history bears out the truth that during the lifetime of John, and in the very area where he resided and wrote, this synthetic philosophy was presented with ruthless disregard for the unity of the congregations. False prophets insinuated themselves into every company of the saints and promulgated their unhallowed speculations. It became necessary to issue blunt warnings to the saints against extending a welcome to such teachers, or allowing their homes to be used as bases from which to launch war on the elemental fact of the incarnation. This brings us to an analysis of the short epistle known as Second John. It contains the passage with which we are concerned in this article, a passage which has been twisted so that it can be used to stifle thought and stamp out all honest dissent with the partisan status quo.

The Second Epistle

We shall not enter into the controversy as to identity of the addressee of this letter. It is my personal opinion that it was written to a Christian sister and her family. It is altogether possible, and appears even probable, that the congregation of saints met in her home. It will be observed how John speaks of truth and love in the same connection. He does not regard truth as being composed merely of facts which have been verified. Truth is a relationship which transcends human relationships. John loves the elect lady and her children in the truth (verse 1). All others who have known the truth exhibit the same love. The truth dwells in God's children and is age-lasting (verse 2). The trinity of divine blessings— grace, mercy and peace— these are shared in truth and love (3). We walk in truth as required by God (4).

John approaches the primary purpose of his letter of admonition and warning with familiar language. Certain phrases are at once associated with certain writers. One of these phrases used by John is "a new commandment." Every such phrase should be considered in the light of its other appearances. That which John wrote to the elect lady will be correctly understood only in conjunction with what he wrote elsewhere upon the same topic. We must never forget the gospel record and first epistle of John are *general.* **They were written to meet a condition faced by the community of saints at large. The second epistle is** *specific.* **It deals with the same condition on a local basis and provides a specific approach to it. But the specific must always be understood in the light of the general. One is not qualified to diagnose and treat a specific cancer until he knows the nature of cancer in general.**

1. John filled his gospel record and first two epistles with a dissertation on love (*agape***) but these were not written primarily to be treatises on love at all. They were produced to offset a dangerous philosophy which threatened dissolution of the community by destroying the foundation upon which it was built. Love is the antidote to such a condition because it cements**

and holds the hearts of the saints together in times of greatest stress. One who reads the writings of John about love will derive much pleasure from the observations of the apostle but he will never understand why John injected the teaching as he did until he remembers that love was a prescription for the body at a time when certain errors were becoming epidemic.

2. John besought the elect lady to remember that he wrote no new commandment. He simply reminded her of the commandment heard from the beginning. He identifies that commandment— *that we love one another* **(5). Only if we recall constantly the nature of this commandment which was had from the beginning can we ever understand John properly. In 1 John 2:7, the brethren are told that John will write no new commandment unto them, but an old commandment which they had from the beginning. They are told that the old commandment is** *the word* **which they heard from the beginning.**

The word **is not the new covenant scriptures. They did not have this from the beginning. The new covenant scriptures grew out of needs created by later circumstances. Philemon was a letter of commendation for a runaway slave, Onesimus, who was returning to his master. Philippians was a letter of thanks for assistance to Paul when he was in prison. First Corinthians was written to deal with a demoralizing state of affairs disclosed by the visiting family of Chloe, and to answer queries in a letter brought by Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus. All this came later. The word which was heard from the beginning was "Love one another."**

From the beginning Jesus said, "This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you" (John 15:12). Again, "These things I command you, that ye love one another" (15:17). John wrote to the elect lady, "This is love, that ye walk after his commandments" (2 John 6). Those who regard the Way as being a legalistic system lay great stress upon this, but they fail to grasp the significance of the following statement "This is

his commandment, that, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it." The previous verse tells us that what we heard from the beginning was to love one another. This is the commandment of Christ. What John is here saying is, "This is love, that we walk after his commandments, and his commandment is that we love one another, and walk in love." But why does John use "commandments" (plural) and "commandment" (singular) in the same sense? The answer is found in Romans 13:9 where we are told that all the commandments are summed up in one word, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." This lifts the commandments of Christ above the level of law to the plane of love. This is the word we had from the beginning.

3. The reason for the admonition to the lady and her children to walk in love is that, "Many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist" (7). Here John pointedly identifies the kind of traveling false teachers against whom he warns the recipients of this epistle. This letter was written to counter the efforts of the Gnostics. "The many deceivers who have entered into the world" are "the many false prophets who are gone into the world" (1 John 4:1). The deceivers of whom he now writes are the seducers of whom he has written. "These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you" (1 John 2:26). The things written identify the personages as antichrists (1 John 2:18). This first century apostolic letter was a pertinent and poignant warning against those who deny the teaching that Jesus was the incarnate Son of God.

The Fundamental Doctrine

4. The elect lady and her children are cautioned, "Look to yourselves, that you may not lose what you (or we) have worked for, but may win a full reward" (verse 8). The purpose of the apostolic message was to build men in love or, the Christhood of

Jesus, so that the eternal life they possessed by having the Son might eventually terminate in fulness of joy in His presence. Those who face up to the fact of His divine Sonship in the flesh will be rewarded with fellowship face to face in the future. If we abide in Him here we will abide in His presence over there. But if antichrists seduce us to forfeit our faith in the greatest fact in the universe we will lose all. So fundamental is this fact of faith that rejection of it is the elemental falsehood of this age. "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? (1 John 2:22). There is one foundation of salvation and one foundation of damnation. Both are directly concerned with the same fact. "He that believeth . . . shall be saved he that believeth not shall be damned." (I trust that no carping critic will conclude that I have intentionally devaluated baptism in making this point).

5. "Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son."

To whom does the apostle relate the expression, "Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ?" What is "the doctrine of Christ?" In order to have a better perspective let us notice some of the other translations.

> **Anyone who goes ahead and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God (Revised Standard Version).**
>
> **No one who has God goes too far and fails to stay by the teaching of Christ (Charles B. Williams).**
>
> **Whoever goes beyond, and does not remain within Christ's teaching, will not possess God (Authentic Version).**
>
> **Anyone who runs ahead too far, and does not stand by the doctrine of Christ, is without God (New English Version).**

Anyone who is "advanced" and will not remain by the doctrine of Christ, does not possess God (Moffatt).

The man who is so "advanced" that he is not content with what Christ taught, has in fact no God (J. B. Phillips).

It will be noted that these substitute for "transgresseth" (King James Version) such expressions as: goes ahead, goes too far, goes beyond, runs ahead too far, and advanced. Both Moffatt and Phillips indicate by a usage of quotation marks that the term "advanced" is used in a special sense. Those who are under consideration are not really advanced thinkers; they just flatter themselves that they are. These later versions are more nearly correct than the King James Version. The word "transgress" is a translation of *parabaino*, **and it is true that this is found in a few manuscripts. But all of the rest have** *proagon*, **which means to go ahead, to advance beyond.**

This was the very claim of the Gnostics. They looked with disdain and contempt upon "the common herd" who thought of Jesus as being the Word (Logos) made flesh. They regarded him as an incorporeal emanation from the Creator who led them into advanced thought which made them "the knowing ones."

In their intellectual arrogance they had advanced to the place where they could see that Jesus was not the Christ. Jesus was human. The Christ was spirit. These two were not the same. They did not deny that Jesus existed. They did not deny that the Christ existed. They did not deny that for a period the two had been invested in the same person. But they did deny that Jesus was the Christ or that the Christ was Jesus. Jesus was not the Word (Logos) and had no prior existence to the incarnation, as they viewed it. Therefore there was no incarnation, Jesus did not *come* **in the flesh.**

The apostolic declaration was that Jesus had come in the flesh. This was basic, elemental and fundamental. The spirit which confessed this was of God; the spirit that did not confess it

was not of God, but was antichrist. This was the test proposed by which to "try the spirits whether they are of God" (1 John 4:1-3). This was the foundation. One who was on that foundation might be mistaken about many things and all of them were, but there could be no mistake about the foundation. It is noteworthy that one was built upon this foundation by a positive action— confession that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh (1 John 4:2). The opposite is not denial, which is also a positive action, but simply "not confessing." "Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus is come in the flesh is not of God." This eliminates not only positive denial, but also neutrality. One cannot occupy a neutral position as to the identity of Christ and be built upon the foundation. The foundational fact must be confessed— *as a fact!* **One cannot be either a gnostic or an agnostic.**

6. We can determine what the "doctrine of Christ" is in this sense by the effect of "going beyond" or "abiding in it." One who *advances* **has not God; one who "abides in it" has both the Father and the Son. The doctrine of Christ, in this case, does not consist of** *the things* **Jesus taught, but of** *the thing* **taught about Jesus. The ethical and moral values of Jesus are very important. Nothing we say here must be understood as minimizing their value. One must "keep the commandments of Jesus" (John 15:10), and if he loves Jesus he will keep them, naturally, automatically and spontaneously, for this is the only possible reaction of love. Only one who does not love Jesus will not keep His sayings (John 14:24). Yet we must all, without exception, place some qualification upon living up to the requirements of Jesus. "As far as we are able," "to the extent we understand them," "as we learn what he wishes,"— these are all our own qualifications and limitations to explain how we can have God, and how He can have us, while we fail to live up to His perfect example. We often transgress and often disobey. If we did not the Father would not need to administer chastisement. Yet we are told that all of us are partakers of such chastisement, and without this we would but demonstrate that we are bastards, and not sons.**

But "the doctrine of Christ" about which John wrote cannot be qualified. It cannot be governed by mitigating circumstances. One who does not abide in it has not God. It is just that plain. It is just that positive. What is the doctrine one absolutely must have in order to have God? Whatever it is, it was possessed by all who had God while the apostles were still alive. It was possessed by "the lady and her children" and by "all others who are in the truth." It could not have been a copy of the new covenant scriptures, for no person on earth possessed that, not even the apostle John. It could not have included the Second Epistle of John for those to whom it was written were already "walking in truth" before John wrote it. This epistle could not have been a part of "the doctrine of Christ" under consideration, for there were those who had already gone beyond that doctrine when this epistle was written.

Fortunately John identifies the doctrine essential to having the Father and the Son. "Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ. No one who denies the Son has the Father. He who confesses the Son has the Father also" (1 John 2:23). *Jesus is the Christ!* **This is the foundation of the community of saints, the colony of heaven on earth.** *Jesus is the Christ!* **This is the only confession we may scripturally require of any penitent seeking admission to the fellowship of the redeemed.** *Jesus is the Christ!* **Every spirit which confesses this is of God.** *Jesus is the Christ!* **This is the only creed essential to overcoming the world.** *Jesus is the Christ!* **The one who believes this has the witness in himself.**

But what of the advanced thinker who denies this great fact, and who poses his syncretism as special knowledge for the initiated? How was the Gnostic teacher to be treated? How was one who did not abide in this doctrine to be regarded by those who did abide in it?

7. "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed; for

he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (10,11).

"Do not receive him into the house or give him any greeting, for he who greets him shares his wicked work" (Revised Standard Version).

"If any one who comes to you does not bring this teaching, do not receive him under your roof nor greet him; for he who greets him is a sharer of his evil deeds" (Weymouth).

"If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not welcome him into your house or give him a greeting; for anyone who gives him a greeting is an accomplice in his wicked deeds" (New English Version).

"If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your homes, do not even bid him welcome; for he who bids him welcome shares in his evil deeds" (Authentic Version).

In the face of what has already been said I would not presume upon the intelligence of the reader to further identify "the doctrine." Only those who ignore background, setting, contemporary issues and context, could ever mistake it. The application to other matters could only be made by those with a party axe to grind— those who would fasten upon the phrase "receive him not," to deny their relationship with the very brethren whom Jesus taught us to love. The warping and wresting of this scripture by factional defenders should serve as a warning to us of what happens to those whose hearts are filled with the acid of the party spirit and who search the scriptures for a means to separate and segregate themselves from other brethren in the Lord.

I have already once quoted at length from the pen of Frederic W. Farrar in his book "The Early Days of Christianity." When he produced this noteworthy volume in

1882, he was Canon of Westminster and Chaplain in Ordinary to the queen of England. Perhaps I should be reluctant to burden you with further material from his book, but that volume contains almost a whole chapter dealing with the matter we are now considering. I must omit most of it, as difficult as I find it to do so, and quote for you from his closing paragraphs.

> **I know nothing so profoundly irreligious as the narrow intolerance of an ignorant dogmatism. Had there been anything in this passage which sanctioned so odious a spirit, I could not have believed that it emanated from St. John. A good tree does not bring forth corrupt fruit. The sweet fountain of Christianity cannot send forth the salt and bitter water of fierceness and hate. The Apostle of love would have belied all that is best in his own teaching if he had consciously given an absolution, nay, an incentive, to furious intolerance. The last words of Christian revelation could never have meant that these words have been interpreted to mean— namely, "Hate, exclude, anathematize, persecute, treat as enemies and opponents to be crushed and insulted, those who differ from you in religious opinions." Those who have pretended a Scriptural sanction for such Cain-like religionism have generally put their theories into practice against men who have been infinitely more in the right, and transcendently nearer God, than those who, in killing or injuring them, ignorantly thought that were doing God service.**
>
> **Meanwhile this incidental expression of St. John's brief letter will not lend itself to these gross perversions. What St. John really says, and really means, is something wholly different. False teachers were rife, who, professing to be Christians, robbed the nature of Christ of all which gave its efficacy to the Atonement, and its significance to the Incarnation. These teachers, like other Christian missionaries, traveled from city to city, and in the absence of public inns, were received into the houses of Christian converts. The Christian lady to whom John writes is warned that, if she offers her hospitality to these dangerous emissaries who were subverting the central**

truth of Christianity, she is expressing a public sanction of them; and by doing this and offering them her best wishes she is taking a direct share in the harm they do. This is common sense; nor is there anything uncharitable in it. No one is bound to help forward the dissemination of teaching what he regards as erroneous respecting the most essential doctrines of his own faith. Still less would it have been right to do this in the days when Christian communities were so small and weak. But to interpret this as it has in all ages been practically interpreted— to pervert it into a sort of command to exaggerate the minor variations between religious opinions, and to persecute those whose views differ from our own— to make our own opinions the exclusive test of heresy, and to say, with Cornelius a Lapide, that this verse reprobates "all conversation, all intercourse, all dealings with heretics"— is to interpret Scripture by the glare of partisanship and spiritual self-satisfaction, not to read it under the light of holy love.

Alas! churchmen and theologians have found it a far more easy and agreeable matter to obey their distortion of this supposed command, and even to push its stringency to the very farthest limits, than to obey the command that we should love one another! From the Tree of delusive knowledge they pluck the poisonous and inflating fruits of pride and hatred, while they suffer the fruits of love and meekness to fall neglected from the Tree of Life. The popularity which these verses still enjoy, and the exaggerated misinterpretation still attached to them are due to the fact that they are so acceptable to the arrogance and selfishness, the dishonesty and tyranny, the sloth and obstinacy, of that bitter spirit of religious discord which has been the disgrace of the Church and the scandal of the world.

Inconsistency of Orthodoxy

If I may be allowed the indulgence of using a specific example to illustrate the unwarranted application of this

passage, let me state that I have heard the expression "this doctrine" applied to every item of controversy among the various factions denominating themselves "The Church of Christ." Depending upon the particular party whose champion quoted it, the expression has been related to individual cups in the observation of the Lord's Supper, to Bible classes, colleges, orphan homes, the premillennial viewpoint, instrumental music, missionary societies, and a diversified host of motley issues which have made "the robe of righteousness" a Joseph's coat which puts the rainbow spectrum to shame.

In every instance these partisan exponents have shown themselves to be utterly inconsistent. They have slashed themselves with one side of the knife which they have sharpened in eager anticipation of stabbing others. But their very inconsistency proves that each is better than his unwritten creed. These brethren dare not apply practically what they claim to believe. Take for example the preacher who quotes 2 John 10,11 in condemnation of one who cannot see that instrumental music as an aid in corporate worship is a sin. Does not the one who deplores the use of the instrument receive the other into his house— either the public meetinghouse or his private dwelling?

The fact is that all of the non-instrumental Church of Christ groups I know, not only receive into their houses those who disagree with them, but go to great lengths to try and get them into their houses. When they hold a meeting they spend money on radio and television programs, as well as newspaper advertising, all beamed at the very ones whom they condemn as "bringing not this doctrine." They go from door to door, greeting and saluting all and sundry, and when they find someone who does not agree with their position they *urge* him to come. They meet him at the door, welcome him warmly, and give him a "chief seat in the synagogue."

If 2 John 10,11 applies to "a Christian Church preacher" as my factional brethren so childishly designate those who use

instrumental music, I charge that to even allow him to enter the house (much less invite him to come) makes them "accomplices in his evil deeds." It is such absurd, ridiculous and puerile reasoning which will keep thinking people from seeing the real force and beauty of a plea which began as "a project to unite the Christians in all of the sects." The very essence of sectarianism is exclusiveness, and if anyone is more exclusive than those who twist this scripture to justify their own sectarian prejudices I have yet to meet him. Our brethren should be ashamed to live and afraid to die!

Every party among us, even the most reactionary, will greet any person who attends their meetings— after they get over their surprise. Because of a traditional posture they would not call upon him to pray to the Father who is in all, over all and through all, but the ushers will go halfway across the house to provide him with a songbook already turned to the right page, so he can praise God with the congregation. He cannot pray out loud by himself, but he can pray as loud as he wants with others, if the prayer is set to a tune. I am thankful that literally hundreds of brethren are becoming embarrassed by the imbecility and senselessness of the preposterous position in which they find themselves. The party spirit has driven them so far down a blind alley that at least some are trying to scale the fence at the other end and escape back to Main Street again. This is good and I intend to give them a hand when I can.

I propose to regard all of God's children as my brothers. I intend to treat them as brothers. I have resolved to make nothing a test of fellowship which God has not made a condition of salvation. I shall accuse no one of being an antichrist who is built upon the one foundation simply because he differs with me about such things as instrumental music or the millennium. I will not allow our divergent views upon such matters to keep me from associating with any of my brothers, or helping all of them.

I shall go visit any group to share what I have learned, and

to share in what they have learned. I shall go with none of them in partisan alliance, for my allegiance is to Jesus Christ. I am joined to Him and through Him to all others who are joined unto Him. Never again will I be a champion of any party, faction or clique. I refuse to be affiliated with any clan in which my love for *these* precludes my love for *those*. He is my all!

Under no circumstances will I apply to those who believe that Jesus is the Christ, those passages written to condemn those who do not confess this fact. My brethren are not Gnostics. They have not gone out from us even though we differ about many issues which disturbed our tranquillity. When brethren come to where I am speaking, I shall not seek to determine where they stand on all of the troublesome issues before I call upon them to pray. These are matters between them and our Lord. If they can explain their position to His satisfaction, they need not try to satisfy me with their explanation. I am not so much interested in where they stand as in the direction they are facing. I shall recognize their right to pray because they are in Him and not because they are in some party. I have no party and no party has me! This last is more important than the first. I know a lot of brethren who claim to have no faction, but a faction has a claim upon them. They stand in jeopardy ever hour!

Upon the one foundation living stones are builded together. These stones are not all the same size, shape, texture or variety. A stone house must be built with the stones available in the area. Since stones vary from one area to another, a house in one location may not look like that in another. The house of God is not made of stones that are uniform in knowledge, perception, ability or aptitude. It is composed of those who are joined together by mutual faith in Jesus and cemented by love. The foundation for all is the eternal abiding principle in confessional form, that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." What a majestic truth! What a glorious fact! "If any man come and bring not this doctrine receive him not into your house, and give him no greeting!"

The One Faith

Contents

It is very difficult for most of us to grasp the real essence of the redeemed life. We are conditioned by environment and experience to resist its simplicity, and to try and mould and make it into a pattern to fit our preconceived notions. We live in a world of automation and systematization. We are dominated by monster machines of our own creation which have, under the guise of making life easier, robbed us of our freedom and individuality. We have become statistics instead of persons, we have numbers instead of names, we are slaves to punch cards which rule our earnings and regulate our disbursements.

It is not to be wondered at, that in such a world, we should be seduced into an attempt to reduce our most intimate relationships to standardized procedures, properly classified and codified. Nor should we be amazed that men forget that the relationships always suffer a tortured and agonizing death, throttled by monotony and tormented by a sense of duty and a fear of forgetfulness. A man who draws up a code of marital responsibility in which he agrees to kiss his wife three times per week, on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, at 7:00 o'clock p.m., Central Standard Time, will soon have no wife to kiss. There are areas in human existence which must be left free for spontaneous expression. There are crannies of the heart which are too sacred for the prying eyes of other administrators to explore in an attempt to legislate what shall occupy them. An effort by another to thrust himself into them will serve only to

shatter the fragile vessel.

Our gracious Father in heaven fully understands our needs and yearnings. He knows the manifold complexities of human personality because He made us. In all ages He has adapted His revelation to the needs and conditions of men in their own day. He sent the world of mankind to school for hundreds of years, providing able teachers in the persons of the prophets, who labored in the primary and elementary eras of the world to bring that world to maturity. In this last age He has spoken unto us through His Son.

While preparing the world for the coming of this dispensation, God acted through law in the form of a written code. At the very outset He provided a constitution for Israel, specific in detail and meticulous in its provisions. It is evident that any commonwealth in which justification is to be attempted by law must have that law fully and completely spelled out at the very inception. The commandments cannot be given piecemeal as the people violate the spirit of the arrangement, else men will die because of ignorance of that which has not yet been given.

The advent of Jesus marked a great change. The cross is the "Great Divide" in human history. "Christ is the end of the law for justification" (Romans 10:4). "The law was our custodian until Christ came . . . we are no longer under a custodian" (Gal. 3:24,25). Law was supplanted by faith, but faith is neither a law nor a custodian. If it is either, then Christ died in vain. "For we hold that a man is justified by faith apart from works of law" (Rom. 3:28). "But now that faith has come we are no longer under a custodian" (Gal. 3:25).

The Christian faith has always faced the same problem which has plagued society. Maturity cannot be measured by the calendar. A great many who should be mature because of age (or the age) reveal that they still have infantile or adolescent traits. At Corinth Paul could not address the brethren "as spiritual

men, but as men of the flesh, as babes in Christ." But he wrote, "Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom" (1 Cor. 2:6). The writer to the Hebrews faced the problem. "For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need some one to teach you again the first principles of God's word. You need milk, not solid food; for every one who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their faculties trained by practice to distinguish good from evil" (Heb. 5:12-14).

One of the basic needs of the human being is a sense or feeling of security, and from infancy until death, he acts or reacts in such a manner as to provide for it. Some of the reactions may be unconscious, or appear to be unrelated to the need but are governed by it nonetheless. The adolescent, who is conditioned to expect security in the home and as a member of the family, because of the father-child relationship, finds security in specific laws and strict enforcement. He inwardly craves restraint and secretly regards it as a token of affection. Arbitrary laws are essential to his wellbeing.

On the same basis, God's children, having grown up in an age when they are to be treated as men, but suffering from immaturity, seek for security in a legalistic code. Unable to truly exercise the freedom to love and exist on the plane of the Spirit which is above law, they must take the provisions of grace and warp and twist them into a written code, and then exercise police powers over their brethren who are more humble than themselves, to enforce their code in ruthless disregard for the conscience of others. This is equated with being loyal to God and faithful to the Bible when actually it is detrimental to the whole Christian revelation and utterly disruptive of the fellowship which Jesus came to create.

The Relationship of Faith

It is obvious that our relationship is founded upon *faith.* In Christ we are justified by faith (Romans 5:1). We walk by faith (2 Cor. 5:7). We live by faith (Gal. 2:20). We receive the promise of the Spirit by faith (Gal. 3:14). Indeed it is true that "in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is of any avail, but faith working through love." Any misunderstanding of the relationship of faith can be fatal to the whole Christian structure exactly as an entire building can be endangered by weakening the foundation.

This leads us to the examination of what we believe to be a palpable error in the thinking of many brethren in our day. It is manifested in their treatment of the term "the faith" and is especially exhibited in their conclusions concerning Ephesians 4:5, where the apostle informs us there is "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." The "one faith" is frequently explained as being the entire collection of new covenant scriptures, and, what is worse, these scriptures taken as an extended written code, or legalistic system.

The advocates of orthodoxy seem not to realize that the very scriptures which they regard as a written code declare we have no such arrangement. One of the chief writers of the letters embraced in these scriptures, a man who wrote more of them than any other, declared that "God qualified us to be ministers of a new covenant, not in a written code but in the Spirit, for the written code kills, but the Spirit gives life" (2 Cor. 3:6). Again he writes, "But we are discharged from the law, dead to that which held us captive, so that we serve not under the old written code, but in the new life of the Spirit" (Romans 7:6). Jesus did not nail one law to the cross and hand another one down!

It is a common thing to hear *the one faith* described as "the system of faith including the whole New Testament." Nowhere in the scriptures is our relationship to Jesus defined in such language. No one who speaks as the Bible speaks can justifiably employ this kind of terminology. We are joined to Him in an

intimate embrace in spirit as a man is joined to his wife in the flesh. "But he who is united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him" (1 Cor. 6:17). You cannot reduce a person to a system. In reality there is no such thing as a systematic theology or systematic Christian relationship. These are creations of men. They are responsible for most of the spiritual ills in the world.

We have no inclination to verbally assault our brethren who are guilty of trying to cling to the Judaistic philosophy of legalistic justification and who live B.C. lives in an A.D. world. Instead we feel a sense of compassion as we always do for those who still exhibit juvenile tendencies when they are grown men. We realize that all of these carried-over adolescent traits result from fears and frustrations which are unresolved in their hearts. Rather we seek to deliver them from their ingrown inhibitions and partisan impediments so they may grow up in Christ Jesus and act like men.

We have an abiding confidence in the power of truth to dispel error as the dawn drives away the darkness and the rising sun burns away the fog. We do not lose heart when months of repetition are required before our brothers gain a faint glimmer of what is being said. We are content to labor and to wait, to plant and allow God to provide the increase. It is in that spirit we examine the expression "the one faith" to determine its nature and content. We shall seek to provide certain guidelines for our study as we proceed.

Faith and Doctrine

1. The faith by which we are justified was fully proclaimed on the first Pentecost following the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Nothing was ever added to it as a basis for justification. The faith which justifies is "the faith of the gospel" (Phil. 1:27) and the gospel was announced in its fulness and perfection by the heralds of the King on that day. All that was

demanded of any alien to become a citizen and to enter into the fellowship of the ransomed ones was contained in this initial message. Those who obeyed its demands did not obey an imperfect gospel.

2. In the early days of the Way, "the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to *the faith***" (Acts 6:27). The faith to which the priests became obedient was the faith to which the penitents on Pentecost became obedient. There was but one faith. Thus men embraced the faith twenty years before the first letter was written by an apostle. It is evident that the collection of letters constituting the new covenant scriptures were not a part of the faith.**

3. When Paul landed at Cyprus on his first preaching tour, about 48 A.D., he was summoned by Sergius Paulus, the proconsul, who was anxious to hear the word of God. "But Elymas the magician, withstood them, seeking to turn away the proconsul from *the faith***" (Acts 13:8). This was four years before Paul wrote his first epistle and there is no indication he ever addressed a letter to Cyprus. Thus it was possible for men to be obedient to the faith, and to be turned away from the faith, years before any part of the new covenant scriptures was written.**

4. On that same tour which reached as far as Derbe, Paul returned through Lystra, Iconium and Antioch "strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith" (Acts 14:22). Thus men were in the faith and able to continue in it before even one apostolic letter was penned. But the faith in which they were to continue was that which Paul had brought them. Fortunately we can learn what it was. At Antioch the apostle referred to David and said, "Of this man's posterity God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, as he promised" (Acts 13:23). Again, "And we bring you the good news that what God has promised to the fathers, this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus" (verses 32,33). Again, "Let it be

known to you therefore, brethren, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and by him every one that believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses" (verses 38,39).

This was the faith which was proclaimed, the faith which they embraced, the faith in which they were to continue. This is the one faith. Paul defines it as "my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret for long ages." He says that this is "made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about obedience to *the faith***" (Romans 16:25,26).**

5. Not one of the apostolic epistles was written to introduce men to the faith or to induct them into it. Every letter, without exception, was addressed to those in the faith and because they were in it. For instance, in 1 Corinthians (16:13) the sanctified in Christ Jesus are urged to "stand fast in the faith." In 2 Corinthians (13:5) they are given the instruction, "Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith."

6. If the apostolic epistles constituted the one faith, no congregation of saints on earth, during the lifetime of the apostles, could have the faith in its perfection or completeness. These letters were written to different congregations and individuals and were not collected or compiled until long after the apostles were dead.

7. If the epistles constituted the faith only one of the apostles could possibly have known the faith in its fulness. All of them, including Paul had been slain thirty years or more before John wrote the last of the sacred canon. Some of the apostles may never have seen or read a single letter included in the new covenant scriptures, yet all of them proclaimed the faith. Not one of them, except John, knew anything about his three letters or those addressed to the churches of Asia.

8. The first epistle of which we have record is 1 Thessalonians, probably written about 52 A.D., from Corinth. Yet, the year before that, "the churches were strengthened in the faith, and they increased in numbers daily" (Acts 16:5). Before the epistle was sent the Thessalonians were in the faith, for they had "turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God and to wait for his son from heaven." The apostle said he thanked God continually for the fact "that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God which is at work in you believers" (1 Thess. 2:13,14).

The one faith is not a compendium of moral principles, a code of ethics, or a compilation of laws. It is not a collection of letters, even though divinely authorized and produced by agency of the Spirit. It is the firm conviction that Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God and that He was "put to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification" (Romans 4:25). The very next statement is, "Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Upon no other basis of justification can such peace be secured.

We must honor with our attention the passages cited by honest brothers under the mistaken view that these support their legalistic claims. In doing so we are not attacking men but simply investigating their use, or misuse of the sacred scriptures. It is amazing how men, motivated by partisan considerations, can unwittingly bend the word of God to justify and condone the sin of division and the scandal of schism.

Like Precious Faith

It is urged that 2 Peter 1:1 advocates the idea of conformity and uniformity as God's demand, in the expression "like precious faith." The letter is addressed to them "that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of

God and our Savior Jesus Christ." The like precious faith is considered to be agreement with the partisan position on whatever matters have been exalted to such a status that a faction has formed about them. Although this will seem utterly ridiculous to real students of the Bible it must still be dealt with because of its propagation by sincere, but misguided advocates of a partisan approach to life.

The second epistle of Peter was written to the same persons as the first (2 Peter 3:1) and these were God's chosen ones scattered throughout Asia Minor (1 Peter 1:1). They believed in God who raised Jesus Christ from the dead and gave Him glory, that their faith and hope might be in God (1 Peter 1:21) They had purified their souls in obeying the truth and had been born again of the gospel which had been preached unto them (1:22-25). But Peter declares that in time past they were not a people, but are now the people of God (1 Peter 2:10). Peter was a Jew as were all of the other apostles. The gospel was first preached to the Jews, and later the Gentiles were admitted to the faith.

It was natural for Peter as "a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ" to address his letter "to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God." James Macknight in his *Apostolical Epistles* **paraphrases this, "Symeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to all, both Jews and Gentiles, who have obtained like precious faith in the gospel with us believing Jews . . . . The word for "like precious" is** *isotimos***, which is a term of quality or nature. It is from** *isos***, equal; and** *time***, value or honor. The faith obtained by the Gentiles through the righteousness of God was in no sense inferior to that obtained by the Jews, although the latter had primacy in publication and proclamation. It was a faith equal in value or honor. The term has not one thing to do with those** *in the faith* **agreeing upon every detail of understanding and interpretation, desirous as that might be. It is not even related to our being alike. The statement is that all who enjoy the**

righteousness of God have obtained the same precious faith. There is one faith for both Jew and Gentile.

It is a startling commentary on the destructive violence of the party spirit when one realizes that otherwise good and gentle men are betrayed into equating the faith which all of us share in Christ Jesus with narrow partisan tests of communion. To Peter it was a source of rejoicing that others were *included* in the like precious faith; to orthodox factionalists it is a matter of loyalty to Christ to use the same passage to *exclude* believers from their "fellowship." Betrayed by the use of the word "like" in the King James Version the cult of the rubber stamp gleefully raises the banner of conformity over rival institutions, demanding that all who enter bow to the party mandates. One need not be a scholar of reputation to question the partisan usage of the verse. Even a reading of other versions would be enough to make the party application suspect.

"To those who through the justice of our God and Savior Jesus Christ share our faith and enjoy equal privilege with ourselves" (New English Bible).

"To those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours" (Revised Standard Version).

"To those who have been given, through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ, a faith as precious as our own" (The New Testament in Plain English).

"To those who by the beneficence of our God and of our Savior Jesus Christ have obtained a faith equal in privilege with ours" (The Authentic Version).

The Faith Once Delivered

Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you,

and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints **(Jude 3).**

It is argued by factional leaders that "the faith" here spoken of is the entire body of new covenant scriptures. In addition, each party includes in "the faith" the particular and peculiar traditional interpretation and deductions which separate and segregate it from all other believers, sects and parties.

The content of the faith which was "once for all delivered to the saints" differs with each contentious party among the saints. No two have the same "faith." Instead of "one faith" there are as many faiths as there are factions.

To differ with the party on the one item which is its distinctive and exclusive test of union and communion is to deny the faith and thus to bring upon one the treatment accorded to "a heathen and a publican." If a congregation divides over a millennial theory, the one who contends for an explanation contrary to the accepted traditional view denies the faith. Regardless of how much he loves Jesus and believes in Him, or how pure his life and how fervent his spirit might be, he has denied the Faith when he cannot in good conscience truckle to the edicts and pronouncements or kowtow in abject submission to those "who seem to be somewhat."

Jude was not even speaking of the apostolic letters, much less of the fanciful farfetched and fitful interpretations placed upon them. The faith once for all delivered had been received before he wrote his letter so it is evident the epistle of Jude was not part of it. We can determine from the immediate context the nature of the faith and the reason for the exhortation to contend for it. The word "contend" is a term of combat. It is *epagonizomai* **in the Greek. W. E. Vine says it "signifies to contend about a thing, as a combatant." We can ascertain the nature of the faith for which contention must be made by the**

character of the opposition.

The opposers were ungodly men. They had secretly infiltrated the camp of the saints. They perverted the grace of God into licentiousness. They denied our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. Against such characters, long ago designated for condemnation, "the sanctified, preserved and called ones" (verse 1) were to battle intensely for preservation of "the faith which was once delivered." It is obvious that *the faith* **was related to the proper concept of grace and its function, and the acknowledgment of the Lordship of Jesus Christ. These were the things being perverted and denied which made the earnest contention so essential.**

One can hardly think of anything more detrimental to God's purpose or to Christ's prayer for unity than to apply such scriptures to the differences arising between brothers. Are our brothers who differ with us in opinion about the issues which trouble us ungodly persons? Are they the kind of individuals who were long ago designated for condemnation? Do they pervert the grace of God into licentiousness? Have they denied our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ? The truth is that regardless of the right or wrong of the things about which we have debated among ourselves, not one of them is a part of the faith once for all delivered to the saints. To confuse them with the faith is to confound sinners and mobilize the saints for savage civil strife. It is also to reveal the meagerness of our own scholarship and the dearth of our love. Our brethren are all in the faith once delivered. They have not denied it. They cherish it and revere it, although they cannot agree with us about every idea we hold.

The faith delivered once for all is that which produces our common salvation. It is that which initiates us all into the majestic covenantal relationship with the Father and Son. It is that which inaugurates fellowship with Deity and adopts us into the heavenly family. It is this faith based upon grace which

severs us from the old life of sin and gives us access to eternal life — "the eternal life which was with the Father and manifested unto us."

Denying the Faith

The acceptance of the revolutionary truth that Jesus is the Son of God and our Master and Lord, by its very nature obligates us to imitate His life as partakers of the divine nature. As truth becomes available unto us we must embrace and apply it to our own life and conduct, or we deny the faith which brings us into relationship with the truth. To deliberately rebel against the life demanded by the relationship we sustain in the faith is to disown that relationship and the faith which creates it.

Faith is the foundation of the Christian life and love is its embodiment. In Christ Jesus "faith which works by love" is what counts. Love is the fulfilling of the law. All the commandments are summed up in it (Romans 13:10). Love must be in deed and in truth, not in mere word or speech. "But if any one has this world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him" (1 John 3:17).

This will explain the passage which is often used against our thesis. In 1 Timothy 5 the apostle gives instruction relating to the care of widows. The community of saints is ordered to sustain real widows, that is those who are left all alone and bereft of all immediate relatives. Those widows having children or grandchildren are to be supported by their offspring. The record says, "If any one does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his own family, he has disowned the faith and is worse than an unbeliever" (verse 8).

Many unbelievers, motivated only by a natural affection, would not allow a widowed mother to suffer. A Christian has the additional motive of belonging to Christ Jesus, whose ministry

was summed up in the words, "He went about doing good." To refuse to love others is to deny the working principle of the faith which is intended to bind us to Jesus. It is to make our profession empty, shallow and senseless. Rowland Hill was wont to remark that when a man becomes a Christian even his dog knows the difference. E. K. Simpson said, "A religious profession which falls below the standard of duty recognized by the world is a wretched fraud."

Birth and Growth

The faith relates to the life and death of Jesus; the apostolic epistles relate to our own life and death. The faith portrays what Jesus has done and will do for us, and we accept it: the doctrine portrays what we must do for Jesus and we attempt it. One comes by proclamation; the other by indoctrination. Both are the word of God, but the gospel has to do with our begetting, the doctrine with our development. One may be begotten in a minute but continue to grow for a lifetime. One does not digest all of the food God has provided on the day he is born.

To confuse the faith which all must have to be in Christ with knowledge of the word which all must acquire as they grow in Christ is a tragic error. To make fellowship contingent upon uniformity in degree of knowledge is a fatal fallacy. If fellowship is based upon the faith, and the faith consists of every epistle in the new covenant scriptures, then one must fully know every passage or he cannot be in the faith. Yet Paul declares, "If any one imagines that he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know" (1 Cor. 8:2). This proves we are all deficient in knowledge, and the one who imagines that he is not is worse off than the others.

Those who plead for uniformity in knowledge of the word of God as a basis for fellowship must either demand perfect

knowledge or else they must designate the areas in which one must know to be in the fellowship, as distinguished from those areas in which he may be ignorant and still be justified of God. How much in God's word can one be mistaken about and still be justified? What percentage must he be right about before God no longer recognizes him as in the family? How much must one grow in intellectual attainment in order to continue as a brother? How sick must one become from spiritual vitamin deficiency before the Father disowns him as a child?

To postulate that one must have perfect knowledge of every detail of revelation is to require inerrancy and infallibility and to demand that he be God. This is what I call "the Haman's gallows argument." It is affirmed that fellowship with ourselves is contingent upon knowing all we know and understanding everything as we do, which means that our own fellowship with God is dependent upon knowing all that God knows and understanding everything as He does. Since no one is rash enough to claim this for himself, he admits he is not in fellowship with God, and damns himself by the argument he concocted to deny others. "By what judgment you judge you will be judged."

On the other hand, if he concedes that others do not need to agree upon every matter of doctrinal interpretation in order to be in the fellowship, he must exercise his human judgment as to what portion is essential. When he binds this upon others as a term of communion he exercises the prerogative of God. Was not the revelation of God given to all of the saints? Do others not have the same freedom as ourselves to make those emphases which are commended to their own intellects and consciences as important and relevant to the Christian walk? If, in the physical life, we must recognize the difference in digestive ability and capacity, shall we not do the same in the spiritual realm? Is not growth in the family of God progressive and individual?

Life is more important than food. "Is not the life more than meat?" (Matt. 6:25). The whole purpose of food is to

sustain life. Bread which comes from the earth is the staff of physical life. The bread which came down from heaven is the staff of spiritual life. Any use of food to impair life, or any application of a theory of nutrition to destroy life, is criminal. If our emphasis upon physical food is such as to destroy human life and its relationships we have a warped view of the place of both life and bread. In the same manner we must regard the sacredness of the life in Christ Jesus as superior to the given means of growth. Our sense of values must never become so distorted that we sacrifice life for doctrinal correctness, especially when that correctness is determined by our own deductions and interpretations. Bread has not been given for the purpose of pounding the other children over the head. No one but the Great Physician can determine the proper amount of spiritual food intake and rate of growth for each of God's children. Those who berate others may themselves be deficient. Our problem is that we have too many "doctors" practicing without a license, each heading his own little clinic and dispensary.

The true basis of our continuance in corporate unity can never be predicated upon an arbitrarily determined degree of knowledge at a given time. If it is, we shall need to exclude from our fellowship in the afternoon those whom we baptized in the morning. If it be argued that when men come into Christ, we must give them time to grow, the same principle will force us to continue to be patient, forbearing and tolerant with them as long as they are growing in Him. Thus the basis of the corporate functioning in Christ is the faith which creates the state, and a proper attitude toward truth of those within that state. One may love truth and know little of it, or he may know a great deal and have but little respect for it. In the final analysis *attitude* is the determinant factor between true discipleship and sectarianism. One is not a sectarian because of where he happens to be at a given time, but because of his attitude toward truth regardless of where he is. This must never be forgotten, for if we forget it we will probably be sectarian.

Doctrinal Values

What relationship has the apostolic doctrine upon which we feed, with the faith which produces our life, or, for that matter, is our life? To phrase the question in another fashion, what relationship exists between the seed or sperm by which we are begotten and the food of which we partake after birth? What relationship exists between the pasture upon which a sheep forages and that which makes it a sheep? We propose to face up to these matters frankly, fully and fearlessly. In order for you to follow our reasoning with greater facility we will present our views in numerical sequence.

1. Both the gospel (Good News) which brings us into affinity with eternal life and the apostolic doctrine which sustains us, are the word of God. Paul commended the Thessalonians because they accepted the gospel "not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers" (1 Thess. 2:13). To the Corinthians he wrote, "If any one thinks that he is a prophet or spiritual, he should acknowledge that what I am writing to you is a command of the Lord. If any one does not recognize this, he is not recognized" (1 Cor. 14:37,38). We accept without question or quibble that the Good News of salvation in Christ Jesus and the means of Christian growth are both from the Father of lights.

2. The apostolic letters do not constitute the new covenant, or new testament, and are nowhere said to do so in the sacred writings. The new covenant is not a written code (2 Cor. 3:6). It is not even written with ink (2 Cor. 3:3). The apostolic letters were written with pen and ink (3 John 13). The new covenant is an individual and personal Agreement by which one commits himself to, and is adopted by God into His family, as a child. This covenant is written on human hearts by the Spirit of the living God (2 Cor. 3:3; Heb. 8:10). This divine-human Compact cannot be effected by any other person on earth for another. Neither can it be affected by any other person. Read those two

sentences again!

3. Those who heard the Good News on Pentecost, and accepted its implications for their lives entered into the new covenant relationship as fully as any other persons ever did since that time. At the moment, they knew nothing of the apostolic doctrine which was gradually revealed over a period of many years as need arose and abuses were created by those in the covenantal relationship. The gospel which produced the covenantal relationship had to be announced prior to that relationship which it was to create and which grew out of it; while the apostolic doctrine was revealed as a need was felt for information as to conduct and behavior in Christ. The entrance into the life relationship was not contingent upon knowledge of subsequent doctrine. The gospel was to make children of God; the apostolic doctrine was to make children of God better.

4. The Good News was never proclaimed to any person with any other intention or objective than to bring him into covenant relationship with God through Jesus Christ. No apostolic letter was ever written to any person or group to bring such person or group into the covenant relationship. All letters were written to those in the covenant relationship and because they were in it. The very first letter Paul wrote was addressed to those who were in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. The second letter was addressed to the same identical ones.

5. The apostolic epistles are not a pattern or blueprint. They were never intended to be. There is a difference between a love letter and a blueprint. One may contain advice but the other sets forth specifications. A blueprint must always be available in full and in the hands of the builders before construction starts. There were many in Christ Jesus who actually suffered death for Him before the first epistle was written. Congregations of saints had been planted and grew in spiritual stature before letters were ever written to them. Our pattern is a person! Our life is unity with that person! "He who has the Son has life; he who has

not the Son has not life" (1 John 5:12). "He is our wisdom, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption" (1 Cor. 1:30). Our pattern is not external but internal. Our lives are shaped and transformed by the Spirit and not by an external code. We "are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit" (2 Cor. 3:18).

6. The purpose of the apostolic epistles is to provide, by our assimilation of truth as revealed, for our growth in the divine nature in order that we may automatically and spontaneously act and react to given situations as Jesus would under the same circumstances. It was when congregations responded as Jesus would that Paul wrote them letters of thanksgiving and commendation as he did to Philippi, "Let your bearing toward one another arise out of your life in Christ Jesus" (2:5). It was when they did not that he wrote them of the dangers attendant upon such a course. "But that is not how you learned Christ" (Eph. 4:20). Christianity is not Jesus pointing us to a book as a pattern, but a book pointing us to Jesus as our pattern.

This will make all of the difference in the world in our attitude toward each other. Every sincere person thinks he understands and does just what the book teaches. His stock-in-trade remedy for disunity is the platitude, "If everyone will just take the Bible for what it says, and do just what it teaches we will all be one." This old cliche has been proven unrealistic and unworkable. Those who mouth it are most divided and strifetorn. In spite of the sincerity of each, what is actually meant is, "If everyone will just take the Bible for what I say it means, and do just what I teach it requires, we will all be one." All of our confusion stems from the fact that every one who regards the Bible as our pattern thinks he perfectly grasps that pattern while others labor in ignorance, stubbornness and stupidity. All of us have seen communities where there are five or six different groups who say that if everyone will take the Bible for what it says, unity will result, and yet none of the six

have anything to do with any of the others. The world is catching on to such childishness and inconsistency.

Once we recognize that Jesus is the pattern, it follows that the greater our sincerity the more humbly will we admit that we fall far short of this example, and the easier it is to recognize that none of us are perfectly following the pattern. Thus we can receive each other in Christ as equals— not in knowledge, understanding or perception— but in our need of grace to save. It creates a lot of difference in attitude if we think that some of us are already on higher ground tossing a rope to those who are floundering about in the waves, or if we recognize that all of us are still in the deep and are all struggling together to reach a goal or ideal. We need to be careful that we do not secretly pride ourselves that it is by *our grace* others can be saved.

The real criterion is not at all our knowledge of a code or book, even though divinely given. It is love for a person. In the school of Jesus it is not mastery of a text but affection for the teacher which brings recognition. Knowledge inflates self, but love inspires imitation of another. As the apostle puts it, "Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. If anyone imagines that he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know. But if one loves God, one is known by him" (1 Cor. 8:1-3). Of course if we truly love Him we will want to hear what He says and do what He asks us to do. We will not do this because of legalistic demands but because of loving commands.

7. Nothing we have said herein is intended to derogate the apostolic epistles. It is written simply to place doctrine in proper perspective, to enable us to regard it as God intended. To say that life does not originate with bread is not to speak disparagingly of bread. To observe that family relationship is not created by food is in no sense to undervalue food. The man who truly grasps what we are saying will find the revealed will of God growing more precious unto him day by day. This has been our personal experience in the freedom we enjoy from the

pettifogging trivia which legalistic attitudes convert into tests of communion. "Christ sets us free, to be free men. Stand firm, then, and refuse to be tied to the yoke of slavery again" (Gal. 5:1). We intend to study God's precious truth for ourselves. We shall allow no one to do our thinking on earth who cannot answer for us at the judgment. And this very resolution makes every word within the sacred pages pulsate with life and glow with the light of new meaning and relevance in our own life.

Doctrine and Fellowship

Every person who truly loves the Father will want to know all that the Father has said. While it is true that one who commits himself to Christ obligates himself by that very act to familiarize himself with all that God has taught, he will not do so out of a sense of obligation but as a joyful privilege. It is one thing to study to be a shrewd lawyer, and a wholly different thing to study to be a loving and affectionate son. Such a son will be as tolerant of others in their deficiencies as the Father is of his weaknesses. He will not set up a standard for others which God has not set up for all. This warrants the following observations.

1. The word of God has a meaning and the doctrine of God can be understood. Such understanding can only result from diligent investigation by earnest students who examine the text of the revelation and apply to their research those rules of logical interpretation which govern such matters. When proper examination has been made, free from preconceived bias, the result must be conceded to be the doctrine of Christ as given through the holy envoys, the apostles.

2. In view of the fact that such conclusions must depend in part, or in whole, upon the deductions made from the sacred scriptures, and thus represent the sacred oracles as filtered through human rational processes, the conclusions cannot be constituted conditions of union or communion, or tests of one's

relationship to the Father. They must not be regarded as the basis for life but of growth, and that rate differs with each individual who is in Christ.

3. The deductions from the sacred revelation as made by one individual, or a group of individuals conducting research in concert, are not formally binding upon any other individual, unless commended unto such individual by his own investigation, perception and conscience. They can be shared with others but not saddled upon them, for they can be binding only to the degree and in the measure that they are personally grasped and comprehended. If this be not true the following evils will result.

a. Individual responsibility will be destroyed and men will be subjected to creedal tests and criteria arbitrarily imposed.

b. Those who concur with such imposition upon themselves will repose their faith in the wisdom of men rather than in the wisdom of God.

c. The supreme court of appeal will be "the infallible interpretation" of each party, a thought as reprehensible as "an infallible interpreter," or pope.

4. No opinion, honestly held by a child of God can be made a basis of fellowship or a test of it. Such an opinion must never be bound upon others as a creed, nor must others threaten excommunication of one who holds such opinion if he does not relinquish it. The sword of the Spirit must never be used to kill or destroy those who are indwelt of the Spirit. Separation upon the basis of opinion must never be condoned. The called out ones are never called out from among the called out.

All of God's children are my beloved brethren. I have no brothers who are not beloved. I have no half-brothers, step-brothers, or brothers-in-law in Christ Jesus. Many of my brothers disagree with me about some things, and some of my

brothers disagree with me about many things. On every controversial issue which has disturbed our tranquility some of my brothers take one position, while some take another.

They are all my brothers, not because of any of their views but in spite of all of them. I shall recognize them as brothers publicly and privately. I will call upon them to pray and participate in my meetings. I will love them and cherish them. I will maintain my personal convictions about all of our troublesome problems, but I will not allow these to negate or deny the sublimity of our relationship.

We are members of the same body. We are branches of the same Vine. We are sheep of the same flock. We are children of the same Father. No one will ever herd me into a corral where I must set at nought or boorishly treat some of my brothers to be recognized and used by a group of others. I value the Lord and His love too highly. The price one pays for factionalism is too great. The Christ whom I serve is not a party chieftain but Lord of the whole church. He is not the president of a faction but the head of the whole body— every member of it!

I have no perfect brothers. They are all brothers in error. All of them are as weak and fallible, as helpless and remiss, as myself. Some are in error on some things, some on other things, but none of them know all there is to know, and none are free from error. No, not one! It is foolish and arrogant for brothers in error to label others as "brothers in error" as if those who slapped on the label were free from error. Such men, knowing their own failures and shortcomings should bow in abject humility before the Father of all and entreat for His forgiveness.

If I am in the fellowship with any brothers at all they are brothers in error. This does not bother me because it is this kind of persons to whom grace is extended. Those who are as perfect as God will not need the blessings of grace. I do not love error. I deplore it. I simply love my brothers and I do not intend to deny

brotherhood on the basis of imbecility, lack of understanding or mistaken views. If life in Christ consisted of being right about everything and every point of doctrine, I would have to confess I have never lived, and the "I" of today would have to sever all relationship with the "Me" of yesterday.

I do not plead that my brethren accept anything which cuts across personal conscience or is contrary to conviction. I simply plead that they quit playing God and accept all of God's children as their brothers. God does not tell us how to treat the lengthy catalogue of disturbing items. He does tell us how to treat our brothers. I might be right about all of these things and go to hell because I did not show love for my brothers, or, I might be mistaken about a lot of things and go to heaven because I love my Father and all of His children.

We live in Christ through the faith, the one faith, the faith once for all delivered. That faith is created by the cross. It is not a faith based upon being in the right position about everything, but upon being in the right Person. I shall elevate nothing higher than the cross. I will allow nothing to overshadow it. I will permit the blood of the cross to blot from my life those things which hinder, but I will permit none of those to blot out the blood of the cross. The life is in the blood. I will use the cross to batter down walls between brethren but I will not use it to batter down brethren.

It is the cross which made me free to love and to serve. It is the cross which made it possible for me to accept all others as God accepted me, not because I was worthy, but in spite of my unworthiness. I will cling to the cross and through it I will cling to every other person who does the same. The greatest unifying instrument in this fragmented world is the cross of Jesus. With it we can stop the silly division and the inane fighting which has made us to appear ridiculous in the eyes of the pagan world. One in Christ! One at the cross! This is what the faith once delivered is all about!

The Great Problem

Contents

It has been said more than once in this volume that "fellowship" is the English term most often used as a rendering for the Greek *koinonia.* It is not the equivalent of *koinonia*, for equivalent means "equal in value or power," and there is no single English word capable of capturing the full meaning of *koinonia.* The translators who gave us *The New English Bible* knew this and used the expression "sharing in the common life." My own investigation leads me to endorse this as the best rendering known to me.

Fellowship is composed of the two words "fellow" and "ship." Fellow is from the Anglo-Saxon *felagi*, comrade or partner. It has been surmised that it may have originally signified those who bound themselves together by a blood-covenant. If this is so, the word signified more than a casual partnership in land or business, but there is no real evidence to sustain this. "Ship" is a suffix indicating state or condition. Sonship is a state in which we share as sons, companionship is a state in which we share as companions. Fellowship is a state in which we share as fellows, that is, as associates or peers.

The word "fellow" shows it is a relation of persons to each other, and not of persons to ideas or things. No one ever asks, "Do you companionship automobiles"? Nor does one ever ask, "Do you partnership the common market theory"? But that is no more ridiculous than to ask, "Do you fellowship instrumental music in corporate worship?" or "Do you fellowship

premillennialism"? It would be just as absurd to ask, "Do you partnership your associate in the service station"? Yet we constantly hear those who are ignorant of the significance of fellowship asking, "Do you fellowship this individual or that?" You may be in partnership with your associate, and in the fellowship with your brethren, but we need to keep our language straight unless we wish to demonstrate that our ideas are warped.

In the context of the new covenant, fellowship is the state or condition of sharing in the life of Jesus Christ into which we are called by God (1 Corinthians 1:9). God issued the call through the gospel (2 Thess. 2:14), a distinct proclamation of seven historical facts designed to establish the most sublime truth of all ages, that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the living God. The response to this call is belief of the fact and submission to the lordship of Jesus in one act, immersion in water under His authority or name. Every person in the universe who believes with all of his heart that Jesus is the Messiah and God's Son, and who is immersed in validation of that faith is in the fellowship. He is in it by an act of God. He is received of the Lord to the glory of God (Romans 15:7).

We are called as individuals, we respond as individuals, and we are received as individuals. But we are not simply called out of the world, we are also called together in Christ. We share in the common life of the Father and Son, which is eternal life, but because we do we also share with all others who share that life (1 John 1:3). We are not joined to Jesus because we are joined to others, but we are joined to others because we are joined to Jesus. Our relationship on the horizontal plane does not create our relationship on the vertical plane, but our relationship on the vertical plane creates our relationship on the horizontal.

This means that what one does or thinks on the horizontal plane need not affect the vertical relationship of another at all

unless he personally condones or endorses it. No one is held responsible for anything which he disavows. Jesus plainly taught that individuals could be in a congregation which was dead and whose works were not perfect before God, and still walk with him in white because they were worthy (Revelation 3:1-4). Indeed, He also taught that persons could be in a congregation where a woman taught and seduced his servants to commit fornication, but if they refused her doctrine and practice and kept His word to the end, they would be blessed.

Obviously there will be some things occur among brethren in which one cannot participate because of conscience. One must never violate his personal conviction by sharing in any view or act which appears to him to be contrary to the will of God. But such differences will not affect the fellowship which results from our relationship to Jesus unless one or the other denies the Son of God or renounces His rule. Our fellowship with God is not conditioned upon seeing everything alike or upon doing everything in the same fashion but upon receiving Jesus as the Messiah and His Son. So long as we do not deliberately repudiate this conviction by word or deed the fellowship remains intact.

Fortunately we have a good example of this in the letter Paul addressed to the Romans. There were those who could freely eat meat and others whose consciences would not allow them to do so. Certainly the latter could not jointly participate with the former in this action. But this did not affect the fellowship, for the simple reason that God had received them. "Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him" (Romans 14:3). One of our human problems has always been the false assumption that if we could not jointly participate in some things we could not work together in anything.

What has been overlooked is that God's children can differ

in Christ although they cannot differ about who He is. They need not regard everything alike, but everything they regard must be to the Lord. "He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it." So long as two persons exalt their relationship to the Lord above their differences they can keep both their differences and one another. It is only when what they think means more than what God did for them that they fall apart. This is not so much an indication of fidelity to God's word as it is a sign of egotism. It is a form of idolatry in which men worship their opinions more than they respect God's power and purpose. It is always a sin to destroy a brother for meat or for anything else!

We do not create the fellowship for God has done that. He invites us to share in it by becoming His sons and daughters through faith. Our task is to demonstrate the beauty and strength of a fellowship based upon faith, to a cold and cynical world. We can best do this by manifesting an unbroken love for and attachment to those who differ with us about many things. The world expects those who see everything alike to work together, but to see those laboring in unity who do not concur with each other proves that they have discovered a dynamic more powerful than the carnal nature. It is for this reason that all division within the family of God is condemned. Such division is never once authorized as the solution to fraternal disagreement. Christ is not divided and those in Christ must not be.

It is the thesis of this book that opinions and doctrinal interpretations are occasions for differences, but never for division. It is no sin to differ but it is a sin to divide. Congregations should provide an umbrella of love under which saints with divergent views can find shelter and be loved and cherished. We must make a distinction between a man and his rationalizations. We are not called upon to agree with one's ideas but to accept his person in Christ. Jesus died for men, not

for opinions. When I receive men upon their faith in Jesus, I acknowledge the efficacy of His work, but I need not acknowledge the validity of their reasoning.

My only creed must be Christ. Jesus is the gospel and the gospel is Jesus. The crowning truth of the gospel is that He is the Son of God and, therefore, Lord of all. If I demand that one adopt my view or explanation of a secondary matter, or surrender his own, in order to be received by me, that thing becomes my creed. Whatever one must believe or subscribe to in order to be accepted by any group is the creed of that group, and like all human creeds it is exalted to a position of prominence above the divinely-established fact that Jesus is the Messiah and God's Son. The only basis of *koinonia* is the relationship with the Son created by faith in Him. It is not orthodoxy of opinion, interpretation or explanation.

An Important Question

All history and experience prove that not all men will respect their vows, covenants, pledges or commitments. In the social realm some will begin well but will turn into criminals. In the political realm there will be traitors. In the economic realm there will be crooks. In the military realm there will be deserters. There is no societal relationship composed of human beings which will not be undermined and suffer tragedy because of the irresponsible. God ordained the home and marital relationship on a convenantal basis and yet the land is strewn with the wreckage of broken homes.

The community of believers, composed of strangers and pilgrims who are men and women in the flesh, must expect that from among themselves "men will arise speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them." Many of the congregations during the lifetime of the apostles were faced with serious problems created by those who had known Christ but who

returned to their former state to walk after the flesh. Not a few of the letters addressed to congregations and individuals were written to deal with such situations.

This gives rise to a major question. Are there grounds upon which a community of saints can openly and publicly declare that one of their number will no longer be regarded as in their company? Laying aside the unscriptural expression "withdrawal of fellowship," what are the bases for the solemn terminal act of "delivering one unto Satan"? I believe there are three specifications upon which association can be declared no longer possible, and only three. To go beyond this is to go beyond the scriptures and to substitute human caprice for divine authority. Before I deal with the three reasons it seems appropriate to discuss why these are so serious that toleration, forbearance and longsuffering can no longer be accorded to the guilty.

Faith in Jesus is the door to fellowship with the Father and the Son. This involves an acceptance or reception of Jesus as God's Anointed and Lord of the whole life. "God hath made that same Jesus both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36). There is not one door into the relationship and another one leading out. God does not have one door marked "Entrance" and another marked "Exit." There is only one door. If one desires to leave he simply reverses his decision. He entered by believing in Jesus, he goes out by denying Him. He was ignorant of a lot of things when he came in, he will continue to be ignorant of a lot of things until he dies. The only children God has are ignorant children, although they are ignorant about different things. Their ignorance did not keep them out of Christ and their continued ignorance will not put them out, unless it is deliberate and leads them to rebellion against Jesus.

God's children can remain in, even with their errors and problems, so long as they are willing and eager to be under the lordship of Jesus. Their mistakes are of the head and not of the

heart. The Father does not expect them all to be "straight-A" students. He never runs them off because they are imbecilic, which means weak or feeble-minded. None of them know all there is to know, most of them do not know all they could know. And that covers the entire spectrum from the preacher in the pulpit to the custodian in the broom-closet.

To renounce the lordship of Jesus and refuse longer to confess faith in Him destroys the very foundation of our relationship. God will not retain in His fellowship one who is guilty of such rebellion. No congregation of believers can be true to God and continue to receive one whom God refuses. There are two ways by which one openly shows his faith in Christ— by what he says and by what he does. He demonstrates his rejection of Jesus in the same two ways. The scriptures set forth only three grounds for the congregational dissociation from one previously accepted as one of the redeemed.

1. Denial of Gospel Facts

A much better way to state this is to say, "the advocacy of doctrines which separate from God." Such doctrines are humanly-contrived systems of philosophy which overtly or covertly deny the faith, belief of which brings one into the divine-human relationship, the sharing of the life of God, eternal life. Although many mistaken views may be held, and even expressed, these do not separate from God unless they proceed from or lead to a denial of the right of the Son to be head of the body and Lord of life.

The historical facts of the gospel are seven in number, all of them directly involved in the personality of Jesus, and the implications growing out of this magnificent concept. They are the life, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, coronation and glorification of Jesus. The first five were attested by human witnesses, the last two by the Holy Spirit upon Pentecost. These

facts, for which credible testimony is available, are summed up in the grandest truth to which the human mind can assent, that "Jesus is the Anointed, the Son of God." One who believes this with all of his heart may be wrong about many things, and so long as he is in the flesh will be, but this will not destroy the relationship. It is not based upon being right about a number of things, but upon being in Christ through faith.

Paul delivered Hymenaeus and Alexander unto Satan that they might learn not to blaspheme. They had divorced themselves from faith and a good conscience and made shipwreck of their faith (1 Timothy 2:19,20). He warned against Hymenaeus and Philetus whose gangrenous words resulted from a grave error concerning the truth. By affirming that the resurrection was already past they destroyed the faith of others (2 Timothy 2:17,18). John spoke of those who denied the incarnation, and referred to them as antichrists seducers and false prophets.

The term "false teacher," which in the Greek is *didaskalos* **occurs only once in the new covenant scriptures. It occurs then as a description of a certain kind of character. False teachers were those who denied the Lord that bought them, secretly brought in damnable heresies, and caused the truth to be blasphemed (2 Peter 2:1,2). Despite the sparing use of this derogatory expression, the term is frequently used today for everyone who utters anything contrary to a traditional pattern. There are those who seemingly cannot distinguish between a false teacher and mistaken brother. And they may be more dangerous than those whom they condemn. They seem never to have learned that** *pseudo***, false, applies to that which is deliberately calculated and intended to deceive, mislead, and beguile, and has no reference to those who are honestly and innocently mistaken. To fill the air with "railing accusations" against such makes the railer a greater threat to the harmony of the saints than are the accused ones.**

Espousal of an opinion which does not separate from God should not separate His children from each other. If God is willing to tolerate and forbear one who loves Jesus but is mistaken about some matter, we ought to be willing to do the same. Admittedly, all differences of opinion create tensions but they should not result in termination of relationship. They are not problems of fellowship, but problems in the fellowship. The fellowship is more important than a proper solution to the difficulty and must never be allowed to become secondary to it. But one who denies the facts about Jesus, essential to entrance into the fellowship with God, cannot be retained in a community founded upon affirmation of those facts.

2. Moral Turpitude

All facts to which testimony is given and sustained by evidence involve certain implications for the life and conduct of one who believes the testimony. It is not sufficient to give mere mental assent or pay lipservice to the testimony. One must commit himself to the object of the testimony and order his conduct in such a way as to exemplify that commitment. Faith is trust in a person or principle which impels one to surrender himself to that person or principle regardless of cost or sacrifice.

Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. To follow Jesus is not merely to embrace a way of life, but to share in the life of the Way. To return to a life-style utterly opposed to the moral and ethical values enunciated and exemplified by Jesus is to renounce the lordship of Jesus. It is the equivalent of saying, "I will not have this man reign over me." It is to become a rebel, a revolutionary, a mutineer.

We must be careful at this point for it is easy to equate every lapse or every sin, regardless of circumstances, with rebellion. All sin is sin, but the motivation is not always the same. Certainly the citizens of a country like the United States

are not all rebels, but all of them at some time or other break a law or violate a statute. The apostle John cautions us against saying that we have not sinned or that we have no sin. Instead of acting like hardened and defiant rebels we are often reduced to shame and tears by our own carefree and thoughtless grieving of the Spirit.

But there are those in whom the spirit of self still reigns. Peter refers to such persons as "slaves of corruption." He declares it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them (2 Peter 2:21). He declares that they are spots and blemishes, that they have eyes full of adultery, and they cannot cease from sin.

The life in Christ is a new life. When those in Christ dethrone Him in their hearts and deliberately choose to walk according to the course of this world, enthroning the spirit which works in the children of disobedience, they forfeit the right of association with those who are filled with the fulness of God. In 1 Corinthians 5, the action to be taken by a congregation of saints troubled with such an anarchistic spirit is clearly detailed.

That community of believers had within its confines a man who openly boasted of sexual relations with his father's wife. It was so blatant that Paul said it was a matter of common knowledge. Such a type of carnality was not even sanctioned by the pagans. Paul used five terms to express what action the congregation should take. Such action was to be a public renunciation of the sinner and his sin. It was to be taken "when ye are gathered together."

The saints were to deliver the guilty person unto Satan (verse 5). They were to purge out the old leaven (verse 7). They were not to company with him (verse 9). They were not to eat with him (verse 11). They were to put away from among

themselves that wicked person (verse 13). There is no question about the way a community of saints must act in a case of open rebellion where the individual deliberately adopts a lifestyle which makes him "a wicked person."

What must be realized is that not all in the body of Christ who sin are "wicked persons." They are sinners but they are not that kind of persons. Indeed, the congregation at Corinth must have had a number who sinned. The apostle was hesitant about returning, much as he loved the brethren. He was afraid he would find "debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, and tumults (2 Cor. 12:21). But he was also afraid he would need to mourn over "many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed" (verse 22). If *many* were guilty of such deviations from the path of moral rectitude the congregation was in a sad state of affairs. Yet Paul indicated that he would "weep o'er the erring one, lift up the fallen."

There is a danger that we will associate the term immoral only with sexual offences. Indeed, when the word is used we seem automatically to think of sexual acts. This is not justified by the facts. Actually the word immoral is applicable to anything that is discordant with ethical principles, and to the disciples of Christ this means those principles enunciated and exemplified by Jesus. Anything which is contrary to the nature attributable to the life of our Lord while in the flesh is immoral.

The apostle includes along with the fornicator, the covetous, the idolater, the railer, the drunkard and the extortioner (1 Cor. 5:11). Again it must be remembered that he is here assessing a lifestyle rather than an occasional or isolated instance of sin. It is a matter of interest that the list generally deals with those things which are inimical to a social relationship. The fornicator appropriates for gratification of his lust the body of another. The covetous feels an inordinate desire

for what belongs to another. The idolater bestows a devotion upon something which belongs to another. A railer reviles in harsh, abusive language and thus destroys the peace and dignity of another. A drunkard makes himself obnoxious by his irrationality which destroys communion with others. An extortioner obtains by force, illegality or ingenuity the property of another.

The attitude enjoined by Jesus is summed up in the admonition to do unto others as you would have them do unto you. In the community of the saints each must esteem others better than himself, in honor preferring one another. It is obvious that the body cannot exist if the members destroy one another for selfish ends. Such a course is not only inimical to the congregation but destructive of the divine purpose. Therefore, while patience is required with the weak, the unlearned and easily tempted, one who deliberately chooses to live in defiance of the divine nature no longer has any claim upon the intimate companionship and communion of those whose citizenship is in heaven.

3. The Factional Spirit

The third thing which renders one unfit for continuation in the company of the believers is the unbridled and stubborn sectarian spirit. The purpose, will and pleasure of God is to unite in one all things in Christ (Ephesians 1:9,10). The Holy Spirit is dedicated to the achievement of this goal. The unity we are to maintain is the unity of the Spirit (Ephesians 4:3). The fellowship of which we are to partake is the fellowship of the Spirit (2 Cor. 13:14).

The sectarian spirit is opposed to the Holy Spirit. It is divisive, schismatic and separative. It is a work of the flesh (Gal. 5:20). Jude declares that those who separate themselves are sensual, having not the Spirit (verse 19). Paul instructs that an

individual who exhibits the schismatic spirit should be rejected after having been given at least two admonitory warnings. He declares that one who will not heed and insists upon fragmenting the saints has turned aside from the real purpose of our calling, and persists in sinning, even while his very attitude is self-condemnatory (Titus 3:10,11)

One is not factional merely because he does not agree with the status quo. It is not sinful to entertain and even cherish an opinion which runs counter to the orthodox position. It is not wrong to express one's opinion to others in the proper spirit. None of this is schismatical or heretical. It only becomes so when one solicits adherents to his view for the purpose of building up a party to propagate and defend it, thus causing a cleavage among the saints.

What is not often recognized is that one can be factional even though his views are correct. The sectarian spirit is not related to the validity of the ideas expressed. One is not necessarily a sectarian because he is wrong, but he is wrong because he is a sectarian. His brain may be clear and his heart clouded. The sectarian spirit is a disease of the heart rather than of the mind. To try and "line up" fellow-partisans, and weld them into a cohesive unity devoted to the task of defending *some* truth to the neglect of the whole body of truth, is a sin against God's eternal purpose.

One can be sectarian and not be in a sect. All sects grow out of the sectarian spirit and the spirit precedes the sect. The sectarian spirit is always exclusivistic and it creates exclusive sects. When one regards the party with which he is affiliated as containing all of God's children to the exclusion of all others, he is sectarian. One can be in a sect and not be sectarian at all. If he recognizes that the body of Christ is greater than any sect, including the one in which he finds himself, and that it contains all of the saved upon earth, he is not a sectarian.

Obviously it is easier to give lipservice to such an ideal than it is to implement it. One may enunciate a belief that the body is made up of all the saved, but if he confines his love, affection and recognition only to those of his own sect, he is still sectarian because he allows the sectarian spirit to govern his actions.

No honest opinion held by one who is in Christ Jesus is factional or heretical. No one who holds such an opinion is a subject of admonition from others. It is not their business. They can no more tell a man what he must think than they can tell him what kind of car to drive. To tell a man that he must give up his opinion, or that he must confess it is a sin to hold it, makes those who do so the sectarians, rather than the one who entertains the opinion or deduction. Opinions are private possessions and are not subject to trespass by others, not even preachers or elders.

Only when a man sets out to gather a clan or clique composed of those who would separate themselves in order to preserve and perpetuate an opinion or deduction should he be given warning. If he persists in his divisive action he should be rejected as inimical to the unity of the Spirit. Even then, he must never be rejected because he holds a certain deduction arrived at by human judgment, but only because of his deliberate attempt to form a party around it. It is just as essential to protect the freedom of an individual to think for himself as it is to protect a congregation of saints from one who tries to think for everyone else.

"Do all things without grumbling or questioning, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life . . . " (Philippians 2:14-16).

TALKS TO JEWS AND NON-JEWS

by W. Carl Ketcherside

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Preface

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Mark Twain wrote that Adam had a good thing; when he said something great, he knew that nobody had said it before. We in this generation arrived on the scene too late to say very much that has not been said before, and perhaps said a lot better. For that reason I lay no claim to originality in thought or superiority of expression. My consolation is found in the words of Thomas Carlyle who wrote that the merit of originality is sincerity rather than novelty.

Opportunities often come to those who are ill-equipped to embrace them, and two such opportunities came to me. Through God's gracious providence I was invited to bear witness to my faith to a company of Jews, men and women of reputation in their community. In all, I have testified to my faith in the revelation of God and in the messiahship of Jesus some thirty times before Jewish audiences. These were composed of both those who had accepted Jesus and those who did not.

In this volume I am going to share that testimony, including some of the questions they asked, and my answers. I have sought to present a balanced perspective by compressing a great deal of material into a limited space. Every word was spoken, every question asked, and every reply made, but not always in the exact order here given. There were occasions of tension, as there ought to be in such confrontations between honest men, but there never was an untoward incident. The friendship of those who sincerely differed was unabated.

Soon after I began the meetings with Jewish students, I was invited to deliver a series of lectures based on my understanding of the purpose of the letter to the Hebrews. This invitation came chiefly because some of the men in a group of Christians had heard me present a talk on Hebrews at a retreat. Once again I felt the sense of my own inadequacy, but implored divine aid and proceeded with the task.

In each case I felt a door had been opened to me by the Holy Spirit, and that God's grace was sufficient, so that His strength could be manifested by my very weakness. I eagerly pray that those who read these simple messages may experience a little of the thrill that was mine in delivering them. I have preserved them in the same style and format as they were given orally, with the hope that the reader may feel a more personal relationship with the author. I am conscious of the imperfections of the presentations, but, as John Ruskin wrote, by banishing imperfection we may also destroy expression, check exertion, and paralyze vitality.

My Debt to Jews

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Your gracious invitation to me, to present a series of addresses concerning the basis of my personal faith and hope, places me very deeply in your debt. I am honored beyond my ability to express it, yet I must confess to some trepidation. This is not to say there is any lack of trust in my own conviction. Rather, I am concerned that I may not be able to communicate it to you in a manner that will allow you to question meaningfully what I hold as truly basic.

First of all let me state that I am perfectly aware of the conditions accompanying your invitation. After delivering one introductory message of a general nature, I am to address myself to specific questions that you will raise and wish to hear discussed. I am to hold myself open to any direct questions that you may pose.

This is eminently fair. I do not like hit-and-run tactics, and deplore the idea of making the speaker's rostrum a place from which to fire away in a one-sided duel. I shall welcome your questions, and I trust that you will feel under no constraint of modesty or respect for my person, but will "pour in the grape shot." I am as anxious as you are to find the weak spots in my armor, and you will be my best friends if you will point out any errors in my thinking. Henri Frederic Amiel wrote in his Journal that the condition of real knowledge is the emancipation from error.

By way of introduction, I should like to do two things: detail for you my past experience and relationship with Jews in matters pertaining to religion; and tell you how I expect to conduct myself, along with my reason for choosing this course. I can assure you that my concern for Jews does not stem from a mass psychosis, or a guilt complex occasioned by the way Jews have been treated by some who have professed to be Christians. Much of the shameful history of pogroms and purges I would like to blot out, for I do not condone it. Nevertheless, its sordid stain remains upon the pages of human behavior.

If I were inclined to feel a sense of guilt over such matters, I would have ample grounds for doing so. I grew up in a provincial mining community, among people who were prejudiced for the most part. This feeling was projected toward any who were not white Anglo-Saxon Protestants. Anyone who was "foreign" and "different" was an object of suspicion, calumny, and hostility.

As a boy, I never heard of a black person who was designated anything but "a nigger." Apparently all whose skin was dark were regarded as damned, for I cannot recall a black man being called simply "a nigger." It was always "a damned nigger."

This feeling extended in some degree to all others who were regarded as foreigners and usurpers. In the absence of police, children were threatened by being told, "Old Toby will get you, if you don't behave!" Toby was a harmless Syrian pack-peddler, who traveled through the country selling packets of needles, spools of thread, combs, lace, and other imported articles. He was polite and deferential, but his skin was darker than ours; he spoke an alien dialect; so we were afraid of him.

We called Hungarians who worked in the mines "Hunkies." We called Germans "Krauts," and the Jewish merchants who sold us our shoes and clothing, "Kikes" or

"Sheenies." I am now aware of how vulgar and ignorant such expressions are, but we were that kind of people. It was a long time before I learned that the boorish term "kike" was actually bestowed merely because of the ending of Russian-Jewish names. It didn't matter that some who bore those names were the greatest benefactors of the human race.

I will not forget the day when I came to realize that the word "Sheeny," which was bandied about in our uncouth way, probably was derived from the Yiddish, sheyneh layt. This means "beautiful people," a term used to designate the educated, the cultured, and the wealthy.

Our prejudice was not limited to racial or ethnic differences, however. We felt such hatred toward Roman Catholics. We repeated all of the unfounded stories about their "underhanded plot to capture America." Popular were the scare sheets of yellow journalism that constituted our news media. These served to inflame passions and, on occasion, to incite riots against people whose only crime was that they were different. We were fully convinced that the basement of every Catholic church building was an arsenal for arms, and that the people went to Mass to learn the secret passwords, so that when the time came they could march forth and conquer our fair land for papal domination!

I am grateful for having been delivered from all of this, and I attribute it to the grace of God. Those of you who are humanists will have a different explanation, and it may be necessary for me to explain my position at another time. Presently my concern is to assure the psychologists in our group that I am not approaching these dialogues as a means of purging my conscience of guilt complex stemming from my early environment. Obviously, I am ashamed and deeply regretful of the unwholesome attitudes it engendered. The rays of the sunlight of love have driven from my heart those mists of prejudice and hatred. I am able to love you all, and to do so

sincerely.

Several years ago I reached the decision that I must cultivate an understanding of my Jewish friends. I resolved to go among them and enhance the friendship I felt toward them. In high school I was captain of a debating team, and my immediate colleague was an outstanding Jewish student. We were together a great deal, much of the time in his home. I found him a man of scholarly depth.

When I began to feel the need of closer association, I started with the Reformed Jews, and frequently attended the largest and most prominent temple in our city. Several of you are members of it. As I became better acquainted with the rabbi and the minister of education, I was often asked to speak words of greeting to the congregation gathered for Sabbath services. The principal research for one of my books was done in the temple library.

I enrolled in the annual School of Judaism, and became the only non-Jew in the classes. I eagerly sought to learn the Jewish mind and heart. Eventually I went to the Hillel Foundation House, where I could have a share in the open discussions with students at the university. These were meaningful encounters with sharp young minds, some of them recently having come from kibbutzim in Israel. The rabbi was good to me, and we became close friends. Later I visited the president of Beth Abram, an Orthodox synagogue, and he permitted me to come after the evening prayers and talk at length with the cantor and himself. I felt quite Jewish indeed, when I donned the yarmulke in order to enter the building. I mention these things so that you will all realize that, both by reading and by personal experience, I have been preparing for this occasion. I am still learning, for your traditional proverb is correct: "The Torah has no bottom."

GROUND RULES

Now I must tell you some things I will not do, or even attempt, in these talks. I will not forget that we have been reared in different backgrounds, and that our cultural variances have deep roots, reaching far back into the history of all of us. I will not ignore the frame of reference into which you have been taught to fit life, but will respect it even as I respect all of you. We have met for mutual investigation, not for the imposition of one upon the other.

I shall not refer to myself as a Gentile, since some of you do not like the word as a designation. All of us are aware that words change their connotation, and frequently maintain an aura from the past. I shall speak of Jews and non-Jews, and you will have no difficulty in knowing of whom I speak when I refer to the non-Jewish community.

Another thing that I will not do is quote what I refer to as the New Covenant Scriptures as authoritative for you. I recognize them as the complement of the Jewish Scripture, and personally hold that they furnish a fulfillment of the prophetic Scriptures, which some of you cherish. But you do not regard them as representative of a New Covenant. To do so would mean that the covenant made with your ancestors at Sinai has been superseded, and this you will not concede.

No body of writings can be used as a standard of arbitration unless its authority is recognized by both parties involved. I must either convince you that what I refer to as the New Covenant Scriptures are a revelation from God, or I must not use them as I would in any dispute with those who profess to be Christians. There are such disputes, as I am certain you know.

I am fully aware that not all of you recognize the Jewish Scriptures as being genuine. Two of you have informed me that you are atheists, and several have told me you are agnostics. While it seems almost inconceivable to me that a Jew could be an

atheist, we invite those of you who claim to be, to be our guests, and to ask any questions that you wish. In replying to such questions however, I shall quote from the Jewish Scriptures as authoritative. Our present dialogue does not involve the question whether there is a God, but whether an historical figure, Jesus of Nazareth, is the Messiah and Son of God. I shall proceed upon the basis that God exists, and if I cannot prove that He does, no atheist can prove that He does not.

We welcome the honest agnostics in this forum, for in some aspects and areas of life we all are agnostic. All of us are forced to say that we do not know about many things. It is no sin to be an agnostic, but it is a sin to remain one deliberately, when you can know. To be an agnostic of convenience in order to evade the responsibility that results from knowing, is to be a little less than honest. I have no quarrel with one who is blind, but I am suspicious of one who does not see only because he will not open his eyes.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

I come now to a point that needs emphasizing, although it may require more explaining to the disciples of Jesus who are present than to the rest of you. I am not the least bit interested in designating Jews as "Christians." There is a stigma attached to the word in your minds, and this is with some justification. There were crimes committed in history by those whom you regard as Christians. My statement does not proceed from the fact that the name is abhorrent to you, however. My indifference results from the fact that I have no intention of being caught up in a semantic wrangle. If Jesus is who He claimed to be, and if He validated His claim by His resurrection from the dead, He deserves our allegiance.

Whether or not those who grant such allegiance are called by a particular designation is of little consequence. The first

followers of Jesus were Jews, plus a few proselytes to Judaism. Many of these were persecuted, and some of them even died for their faith in Jesus as the Messiah. They never were designated as Christians and never knew that anyone ever would be. The first man to die for his faith in the messiahship of Jesus was a Hellenistic Jew named Stephen. He knew nothing of being called a Christian, and would not have recognized the name if he had heard it

It was not until the message of Jesus was taken to the non-Jews, that this word was applied to His followers. It is still a question whether it was a term of derision given by the opposers, or a name of divine sanction. Some of the arguments on both sides of that issue are weak and unconvincing to the honest researchist. In any event, if thousands of Jews became disciples of Jesus and lived and died as such without ever being designated Christians, thousands more may do so with the sanction of the Holy Spirit.

I want every person on earth to know Jesus as I know Him, but if those Jews who come to trust in Him constitute simply a Messianic synagogue rather than what the world designates "the Christian church," I shall be as thrilled to know that we are one in Him. It is not necessary that you abandon your culture or others seek to become Jews in order to be members of the one body. Our relationship with God and with one another in the Messiah is not to be organizational or institutional, but personal.

If you are in the Messiah and desire to circumcise your sons on the eighth day, that is both your privilege and your liberty. You have a perfect right to thus remind your offspring that they are descended from Abraham after the flesh, and are in the lineage of the fathers, Isaac and Jacob. Even Jesus was circumcised, you know.

In the Messiah, you may observe the Sabbath, if you desire. This will call to mind that on this day your fathers began

the exodus from the slavery of Egypt and became a free people. I cannot help remarking that, if some of you began to observe the Sabbath in the Messiah, it would be more than you do outside of Him. You would likewise continue to observe Sedar, and set the family table with the roast lamb, the bitter herbs, and matzos. This is your celebration of freedom from enslavement by a cruel nation and its ruler. I am not about to judge you regarding holy days, sabbaths, or new moons, just as I refuse to be judged by others in respect to these matters.

When we come to trust in the righteousness of God, rather than in our own righteousness by law-keeping, it is important to place life in proper perspective. We must realize that it is not a mere matter of doing or not doing things. Rather, it is the transformation from within that makes it possible for us to use the provisions of the world without abusing them. A tree is a beautiful creation, providing much for the comfort and relief of man. Carved into an idol and worshiped, however, it becomes a frightful object. We always must maintain things in their proper place.

Above all else, I do not want any of you to feel that an acceptance of Him whom I regard as the Messiah is in any way related to becoming artificial, American, cultural non-Jews. Whether or not you ever set foot inside an American-style religious edifice is not at all important to me. If you are born from above, as I believe that all of us must be, and come into that life which is the light of men, I will praise God. I will continue to praise Him if you never constitute anything visible but a synagogue of Messianists.

WHO AM I?

I do not pretend to be bringing anything new or different to you. The Messiah whom I proclaim is either the one of whom the prophets spoke, or He is a sham and a pretender. Therefore I

cannot place you in debt to myself. On the contrary, I am deeply indebted to you, and in so many ways that it would be impossible to enumerate them. Actually, what I seek to do is to take what you have cherished as your heritage and have given to the world, and return it with proper interest. Those of you who are in financial and investment circles know that when you deposit your treasure, it is out of your sight and even out of your care for a while. At a later date it returns to you with proper accrual.

I regard myself as a messenger to deliver back to you what you bestowed upon humanity, with an accrued blessing. All I have to bring to you is what your fathers generously gave to the world. The prophets all maintained that their message was not the end, but merely the harbinger of greater things to come. Theirs was a message of hope to be realized later. I have no intention, therefore, of imposing upon you an alien system or a non-Jewish philosophy. Instead, I seek to enter into that fullness which was read in the Torah, the haftarah, and the Hagiographa. This is not to imply that we have a superior insight, so that we can come and explain your prophecies to you. They are our prophecies also, when we embrace them in their fruition. Surely he who breaks bread of the heads of grain has nothing to boast of over him who planted the grain, or even the original seed and stalk. None of us has aught of which to boast, for all we have, including life itself, has been given to us. All of us simply share in the grace of the one God, and all of us are equally in need of it.

I owe my special thanks to the Jews for the rich heritage they have preserved for humanity. They are beloved for the sake of their fathers. It was Abraham who, having heard the call of God, forsook an idolatrous world and became God's pilgrim, searching for a better land. He was the first person of whom it was said that he believed God, and his faith was counted to him for righteousness. Thus, the very idea of justification by faith originated with Abraham. If I can capture this magnificent thought for my life, I can be said to walk in the steps of

Abraham.

To me, the brotherhood of faith is more meaningful than that of the flesh. The latter is involuntary, an accident of birth, but the other is by choice. I cannot attain righteousness by having been permitted to enter the world as a part of a certain family strain. No combination of genes and chromosomes can provide admission to God's grace. Our standing will not be by paternity or pedigree, but by the power of God.

I am also grateful that the oracles of God were committed to Israel, and were preserved inviolate through all their encounters. From a child I have known these sacred writings, and they have thrilled my being. My heroes became these ancient worthies, and as I grew in years I grew in respect for their staunch devotion to the God of Abraham.

It is my conviction that the preservation of the Jews is a direct proof of the continued providence of God. The Jews, found in almost every country under Heaven, stand as a continual testimony to the unchangeable promise of God. Driven by fate and harassed by human hate, they have survived indescribable torture and cruelty.

Many of the people who enslaved the Jews have faded into the gray mists of history. Not a single one of their progeny remains on the earth. But the promise of God was that, as long as the sun shone and the moon beamed, He would not forget His promise to Jacob. So I trust that you will forgive me if I say that my heart beats with renewed hope as I look into your faces this day. The fact that you live is an additional proof to me that our God is a living God. I am also convinced that your people will survive until the sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon shall be turned into blood.

THE ISSUE AT HAND

We have come to the moment when I shall, without hesitation, acknowledge my gratitude to you for providing the one Person who means everything to me, but whose spiritual identity you disclaim. This is not to say that you deny there was a figure in history whose name was Jesus, and whose boyhood town was Nazareth. No really intelligent person denies this. One cannot even date a letter or check without acknowledging that He lived. A few modern gnostics, like their ancient counterparts, seek to explain away the significance of His life, but they are now a bedraggled minority.

Jesus was cradled in the womb of a Jewish girl, who delivered Him into this suffering world in the little town of Bethlehem. We know who the Roman Caesar was, we know who the Jerusalem Herod was, at that time. We know how long Jesus lived, and we know when and how He died. The attestation for these facts is so strong that to deny them would obligate us to deny anything else that happened at the same time or previously.

Our real problem is not whether or not there was such a person. It is rather a question of who He was, His real identity. Was He the Son of God? If so, how can we know for certain? If He was, what difference will it make in my life now? It is absurd to pretend that there are no problems among us. When two people meet and one of them affirms that Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God and the Messiah of the prophets, and the other denies both, obviously a problem exists.

I refuse to be guilty of that form of subterfuge called compromise. In the past this has been indulged in as an attempt to make both sides feel good. Generally such compromise takes the form of admitting that Jesus was "a son of God," in much the same sense that all of us are sons of God. He believed in God and sought to order His life in conformity to the will of God, and thus He could be referred to as a son, a follower, or a disciple of God.

I reject this as wholly untenable. When I speak of Jesus as the Son of God, I mean that He was such in the unique sense. I regard Him as divine, and hold that in Him the fullness of Godhood was embodied. On this matter there can be no surrender. I must stand or fall by this conviction. If Jesus is not who He professed to be, the whole superstructure of which I am a part must come tumbling down.

My future is not dependent upon my subscription to a sounder philosophy or a superior code of morals. I do not rest my hopes nor risk my soul upon a system of rationalization about spiritual matters, but upon reconciliation with God, made possible by the atonement of Jesus. If He is not the Son of God, my hope rests in a house of cards held together by wisps of anxiety, and doomed to dissolution and disillusionment. If Jesus is proven to be a sham, I have nothing to offer you that should command your attention.

So I have placed my all on one prime fact, the greatest in the universe: God broke through the horizontal history of men on the vertical, and where He bisected it, He left a cross. It is in this cross I glory, and it is this conviction I must defend. I am prepared to defend it in our subsequent gatherings. I shall welcome your questions for our future meetings, and I sincerely pray that God will bless all of you, and those who are dear to you, until we meet again.

Are There Three Gods?

Contents

I am happy indeed to appear for this second in our series of personal sharing sessions. As you know, in this and future meetings I am to address my remarks to questions that you have submitted. I should like for our meetings to be as informal as possible. If there arises a question in your mind that is so relevant it cannot be postponed, you must feel free to interject it.

I believe that all of us are sufficiently mature that we will not turn these gatherings into verbal exchanges over trivia. I am certain that you will pose questions of real value, and I promise you I will reply in a spirit of seriousness and respect. You realize, of course, that there are several preliminary matters to which I must devote attention.

Some of you heard the dialogue between an eminent university professor and myself, following our other meeting. My respected friend is a humanist. It is his opinion that the need for God grew out of the superstitions and fears of primitive peoples. They were confronted with circumstances for which they could not account, and in their ignorance they invented gods to explain what to them was unexplainable. His feeling is that science will unravel more and more of the mysteries of life. Thus the need for God will be felt less and less, until He will be retired and go out of business.

The great difference between us lies in the fact that I believe God created man in His image, while my friend holds

that man created gods in his image. Between these two postulates there is a great gulf. It is upon the plateaus of life as it is lived on either side of the chasm that the greatest difference will be seen and felt. It is not my purpose, nor would it be my policy, to take advantage of a formal presentation in which to reply to my friend, and I mention our little encounter merely in passing and by way of introduction.

My position is that God existed as the living source of all life in the universe. From Him came all things, and to Him all will return. He is above all, through all, and in all who humbly seek His face. He is destined to be "all in all" when the last enemy is destroyed. It is with the divine nature that I must deal today, for you have lost no time in pinpointing one of the great questions.

TRINITARIAN?

As finally boiled down, the question is: *Do not Christians actually worship three Gods, and if not, how do you reconcile the idea that to be a Christian you must recognize God, Jesus of Nazareth, and the Holy Spirit as Gods?*

Before answering, it will come as a surprise to you to know that I am doing something today that I have never done, and will not do, with fellow believers in Jesus as the Son of God. Formerly I have steadfastly refused to be drawn into controversy over the nature of Deity. There are several reasons for this, not the least of which is that, being possessed of a finite mind, I am far too limited in scope and breadth of knowledge to encompass the infinite. As Isaiah put it in the long ago, "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding" (Isaiah 40:28). I doubt that one ever explains God. One simply accepts Him on the basis of evidence and faith.

The kind of a deity whom I could get safely in my little mental box is not the God of the universe whom I revere and before whom I bow. I am not a Trinitarian, and neither am I a Unitarian. These are appellations used to designate formal schools of thought, often antagonistic and hostile to one another. They grew up in the ferment of contention, and too often it was a strife about words. By creating categories into which their respective defenders could be pushed or driven, it became easy to assault the party without especially examining the evidence submitted by individuals in both.

It will help you to keep in mind that any attack you may make upon Trinitarianism as a formal doctrine may not be touching my own position. It may actually constitute an evasion of it. I expect to receive you as individuals, to listen to what you say, and to weigh it as carefully as I can. No man must be charged with acceptance of what he disclaims. No one must be charged with a consequence of his personal position when he personally disavows that consequence. Only by such an attitude can we maintain the dignity and secure the freedom of each one of us.

Now, to answer the question, I do not believe there are three Gods. I can recite, and often have recited, without a twinge of conscience, the *Shema:* "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord" (Deuteronomy 6:4). But I do not limit God to one expression or manifestation, for to do this is to seek to confine Him by my finite power of rationalization. I would do no honor to Him by such action; rather, I would make Him less than supreme.

It is my conviction that, in the Scriptures that we all hold sacred, God seeks to show us that He is a composite and united being. The account of the origin of our universe begins with the words, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). The word for God is *Elohim,* which is plural. It is a remarkable term, occurring for the most part in the plural, but

usually connected with a singular verb. I do not think that this word affords a conclusive proof as some Trinitarians do. In view of the following context, I simply say that it affords ground for real study.

The record continues by informing us that, while creation was in a chaotic state, "the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (v. 2). At the very beginning of the sacred writings we have *Elohim,* a plural word, and *ruach,* translated "spirit." I mention this to introduce what I believe is the general tenor of the revelation of God. I do not contend that one can positively affirm that it was the intention here to allude to a personal distinction in what I shall refer to as the Godhood, that is, Deity.

I must frankly tell you that, as I read the Scriptures, it seems to me that there is a constant intimation of a more singular nature of the God of the universe. You will immediately say that this is because I approach the Scriptures with a presupposition, and that I have been conditioned to read them thus. But that objection can be made of yourselves as well. For that reason, I am simply going to enunciate my views, with no dogmatism. I would not want you to accept anything solely upon the basis of my views.

Allow me to cite an example of what I mean. In Isaiah 63:7-10, the prophet begins a recitation of the lovingkindness of Yahweh, as demonstrated to the house of Israel. He attributes the blessings to the mercies of God. He portrays God as saying of Israel, "Surely they are my people, children that will not lie," adding, "So he was their Saviour" (v. 8). You will recognize that the Hebrew word for "Savior" is cognate with the word "Jesus." Actually, you can translate it with no linguistic injustice, "He became their Jesus." But the prophet continues, "In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them." As one studies all of the references to the "angel of God," he becomes convinced that here was a personal manifestation of God in

another form. It was this "angel" with which Jacob wrestled, and he declared, "I have seen God face to face" (Genesis 32:30).

It is significant that when Jacob was nearing death, he summoned the sons of Joseph and blessed them. In doing so, he specifically mentioned God as "the God before whom his fathers, Abraham and Isaac, walked." Jacob called Him the God who had shepherded him during his whole life until that day, and then he called upon the "angel" who had redeemed him from all evil to bless the sons. Thus there are two expressions of God as capable of bestowing a blessing upon mankind.

Further Scriptural research will reveal that the "angel of God's face" is identified with the "Rock" in which Israel was to trust. To those of you who do not believe there is a God, or to those who deny that the Bible contains a divine revelation, this will have no appeal. Those of us who do believe in God, and accept the Torah and haftarah as a communication from God, must reckon with the fact that Moses repeatedly spoke of the "Rock of salvation" as personal.

Some of you are familiar with the rabbinic tradition that, after Moses had provided water from the rock to quench the people's thirst, this rock followed the people and continued to provide them with water. I am sure that most of you were taught this tradition from your childhood. The rock became their savior, but this is affirmed of the "angel of his presence" in Isaiah 63:9. So God manifested himself and His saving power in more than one personality, according to both the Torah and the prophets.

Now, I am going to make an affirmation that may startle you when you hear it. I hold that the idea of a triune God, that is, the manifestation of Deity in three persons, is not contrary to the Hebrew Scriptures at all. It is in harmony with them, and represents their correct teaching. The problem lies, not with what God revealed, but with man's interpretation of it, or, in

this case, with one man's translation or rendition of it.

THE SECOND MOSES

The non-Jews in my audience, and perhaps even some Jews, are not aware that to a great degree modern Judaism is dependent for its form upon one who was honored to such an extent that he has been called the "second Moses." Moses ben Maimon, generally referred to as Moses Maimonides, was born in Cordova, Spain, about 1135. When he was thirteen years old, Spain came under Muslim rule, and the Koran was bound upon Jews and Christians alike. The family of Maimonides was fortunate enough to escape, and after years of wandering, settled in Cairo.

By this time, Maimonides had established a reputation as a scholar, philosopher, and physician. He was made both the Rabbi of Cairo and personal physician to Saladin, the reigning sultan. He undertook the task of synthesizing revelation and human wisdom, of blending faith and reason into a harmonious whole, by reconciling the tenets of rabbinic Judaism with the rationalization of Aristotelian philosophy. If we had the time, I could tell you how this affected Thomas Aquinas, who undertook to do for Catholicism what Maimonides did for Judaism.

It is enough for me to say that, since the revolutionary impact of these men, neither Judaism nor Catholicism is an attempt to recapture primitive purity. They are now systematized. What passes now for Catholicism is actually Thomism. Modern Judaism is an attempt to establish the validity of the doctrinal deductions of Maimonides, as set forth in his thirteen articles of faith and in the monumental work, *Guide to the Perplexed.*

One of the thirteen articles of faith accepted and repeated in the Jewish liturgy is, "I believe with a perfect faith that the Creator, blessed be His name, is an absolute one." The Hebrew

word used here for "absolute one" is *yachid.* It literally means "only one," or "absolute one" as the ultimate reality, indivisible and inseparable. For eight centuries your fathers, and your fathers' fathers, have repeated this creedal statement, and yet it is not what God revealed through Moses in the Torah. It is the very opposite.

In the *Shema,* as contained in Deuteronomy 6:4, God laid down a principle of faith to represent the divine revelation of the nature of Deity: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord," or better, "The Lord our God, the Lord is one." The word for "one" is *achad.* This means a "united one." The first Moses used *achad* (united one), while the "second Moses" used *yachid* (only one). The first Moses revealed the word of God, while the second was trying to produce a human synthesis of thought.

One need not be a profound scholar to see that if what I am saying is true, it makes a great deal of difference. The idea of God as a united one signifies a personality manifesting itself in more than one form, yet perfectly joined in a unity or oneness unique in our universe. This is of vital concern to our exploration, for it could mean that the Lord God, who is one, could manifest himself in the form of a Son without destroying the cardinal truth that He *is* one.

This is as important to the Jewish mind as it is to the non-Jewish mind. Rabbinical tradition always has had to wrestle with such passages as the prophecy of Isaiah: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (9:6). Was Isaiah, who condemned idolatry in such vitriolic terms, affirming that a child to be born was to be another God?

Certainly the import of the passage as the Messianic

prophecy has been dulled by the suggestion that it is a reference to a kingly heir born in the lineage of David. Liberal theology, espoused by both Jews and non-Jews, has sought to explain it away as purely allegorical, or as a paean of praise for the coronation ceremony of a mere earthly monarch. Such explanations never can satisfy those who believe that Isaiah "heard the voice of the Lord" (6:8). There was a child to be born who would be designated "The mighty God" and "everlasting Father." Who was that child? The rabbis declared it was to be the Messiah.

YACHID

Let me validate the distinction to be made between the words *yachid* and *achad* by an appeal to those Scriptures which we all regard as sacred. Let us examine first the implications of the word *yachid.* This is the word used by Moses Maimonides to translate the word "one." I have said it means "absolute one" or "singularly one." Do the Scriptures bear this out?

This word occurs in Genesis 22:12, where God forbids Abraham to proceed in offering Isaac. "And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me." Isaac was unique as the son of promise. In this respect he had no peer. He stood absolutely alone.

The same usage occurs in Amos 8:10, where the prophet predicts the calamity to befall the kingdom of Israel: "I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation; and I will bring up sackcloth upon all loins, and baldness upon every head; and I will make it as the mourning of an only son, and the end thereof as a bitter day."

Also in this connection consider Jeremiah 6:26, where the prophet said, "O daughter of my people, gird thee with

sackcloth, and wallow thyself in ashes: make thee mourning, as for an only son, most bitter lamentation: for the spoiler shall suddenly come upon us."

These uses of *yachid* point up singularity, a oneness, that is not shared. In view of the need for sons to preserve the genealogy, to maintain the tribal distinctions, and to perpetrate the inheritance, the mourning for an only son was more intense. Those who lost an only son could not allay their grief by giving attention more fully to other children.

If God had used this word in the *Shema,* a point might be made linguistically for opposition to the deity of Jesus. It could not destroy it if it is a fact, for facts cannot be set aside merely by linguistic usage. Yet, it must be conceded that, if the Scriptures had used *yachid,* a more positive case could have been made for the opposite contention.

ACHAD

But the Scriptural term is *achad.* I now propose an examination of the tenor of its usage to determine if it is possible to establish a general rule or criterion to be used in measuring the word. I refer to Genesis 2:24 as a point of beginning. When God made woman and presented her to Adam, marriage was instituted for the joy and well-being of the human family. It was then said, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."

No one can deny that here *achad* signified a oneness that is achieved by the union of two persons. It was a union in which the parties were to deem themselves as entirely and indissolubly united. It was as if they were in reality one person, one soul, and one body. Yet the very word signifying such a union is that the Lord is one.

Let us examine another passage. When Dinah, the daughter of Jacob, went to visit some of her Hivite girl friends, she fell for Shechem, a son of the local sheik. Shechem seduced her and wanted to marry her, but her angry brothers decided to kill off all the men in the tribe. They devised a ruse to get the Hivite males to be circumcised, then they could kill them while they were still in pain and unable to fight. In proposing this they said, "Then will we give our daughters unto you, and we will take your daughters to us, and we will dwell with you, and we will become one people" (Genesis 34:16). Here again it is obvious that *achad* achieves oneness by uniting. It is not a oneness stemming from an absoluteness of personality. It is a oneness of unity.

When we say, "The Lord is one," the word conveys the same thought of a united one, a composite one. When Moses said, "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord," he used *achad.* He did not mean to question the nature and sovereignty of God, which could express itself in any form or manner. His purpose was to uphold monotheism, as opposed to the polytheism of the heathen nations.

In the same direct context Moses writes, "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name. Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which are round about you" (Deuteronomy 6:13, 14). There is a great difference between the one true and living God manifesting himself in various personalities, and other gods invented and created by man.

I believe with all my heart that there is one God. I am unalterably opposed to other gods. I make a great distinction, however, between the worship of other gods contrived and constructed by the ingenuity of men, and the worship of the one God in any form in which He reveals His grace, benevolence, and saviorhood.

My humble contention is that God was in Christ reconciling this world to himself. The God who was in Christ was the one God. He is the one Lord of the *Shema,* which you believers recite every day. I know there are differences between us, grave differences. I propose to explore them honestly and openly. I have no desire to smooth them over at the expense of truth. But there is no difference between us in our mutual affirmation that our Lord is one, and beside Him there is no other. On this matter I am in harmony with the best of Judaism.

The sacred book of Judaism, the *Zohar,* bears me out in its comments made on the *Shema.* It asks the question, "Why is there need of mentioning the name of God three times in this verse?" It then provides the answer: "The first Jehovah is the Father above. The second is the stem of Jesse, the Messiah who is to come from the family of Jesse through David. And the third one is the way which is below, and these three are one." I take it that "the way which is below" is the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, who reveals to us "the way." I am in agreement with the *Zohar* in its interpretation of the *Shema.*

I see we have a hand raised. May we have your question?

Do I understand you to say that a Jew can believe that Jesus is the Messiah, and also the Son of God, whatever that means, and still say the Shema without having his fingers crossed?

That is exactly what I mean. It is not a matter of keeping your fingers crossed, but getting your mind uncrossed. A Jew who accepts Jesus as the Messiah of the prophets is no less a Jew than he was before. He can read the same Scriptures that he always has read. He can revere them as much as he always has revered them. The only difference is that the Scriptures will have greater meaning to him, for he will see and know their fulfillment. As it is, my Jewish friends always are on the way to school and never meet the Teacher.

We must not forget that the message of Jesus as the Messiah was first taken to Jews, and that it was done in the very center of Judaism. It was here, where He was best known, that Jews first acknowledged Him. All who announced Him were Jews. All who believed in Him, or into Him, were Jews. They still recited the *Shema,* they still observed the Sabbath, they still observed the feasts. They circumcised their children on the eighth day. Having accepted Jesus as the one of whom the prophets spoke, having been baptized into His name, and having entered into a vital relationship with Him, they now constituted a synagogue of Messianists. The temple was still standing, and they went to it daily at the designated times of prayer.

These Jews did not love the rest of the Jewish community less because they loved the Messiah more. When they gathered on the first day of the week to eat and drink together in memory of Jesus, they did not do so as "Christians," for that designation had not been coined. They came together as Jews who trusted in Jesus because they firmly believed what the prophets had spoken concerning Him. They believed then what I believe now, that Jesus fulfilled the prophecies, and gave meaning to them in His birth, His life, and His death.

I see we have another question.

On what ground do you assume that the Messiah was to be a person? Could not the principles set forth in the Torah accomplish all that was prophesied as to the cleansing of the earth and the unity of mankind?

Thank you! You really have asked two questions, and both are very important. I shall address myself to these at our next meeting, since our time is up. May God bless you all until that time.

A Personal Messiah

Contents

I have been thinking about the uniqueness of this forum. I know of no other place where Jewish men of reputation in a thriving community are willing to sit down with non-Jews to discuss their divergent concepts regarding God's revelation. I am distinctly honored to be invited to share my own heartfelt convictions.

It is obvious that no one could impose his thinking upon this assembly. I assure you I have no desire to do so. You are thoroughly capable of thinking for yourselves. I do not want you to feel a need for unscrewing your heads and placing them under your chairs while I speak. My approach will be rational. It will be in love and deep respect for every one of you. If you cannot conscientiously agree with what I say, I would never ask you to violate your conscience. I will love you whether or not you concur with what I say. As long as these are sharing sessions, I will come. When they become manipulative, I will be conspicuous by my absence.

Today I am to address myself to a two-part question, the first part being the grounds on which I assume the Messiah was to be a person. Before zeroing in on that directly, I would like to suggest a few thoughts for your consideration by way of background.

History will bear out that the ancient Jews all believed in a personal Messiah. There was no idea that the Scriptures taught

anything else. Gradually, men who lived in a land exposed to persecution and overthrow by foreign powers began to sigh for a leader who could free their nation from oppression. It was an easy step to expect the Messiah to be a conquering hero, one who would set up an earthly kingdom. It is my personal opinion that this presupposition militated against the Jews' acceptance of Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah. I state this without desire to criticize. It is simply my commentary on what transpired. I believe that Jesus fulfilled the prophecies in the haftarah, but it is obvious that He did not meet the popular image that had been conjured up in the public mind. It was easy for the Jews to reject Him as Messiah on this ground.

As a kind of parenthetical observation, let me remind you that scholarly Judaism always has had difficulty with the prophecies. Some of these portrayed the Messiah as a ruler, upon whose shoulders the government would rest. Others affirmed He would be a suffering servant, "smitten for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities," as expressed by Isaiah. In an attempt to reconcile this apparent contradiction, many rabbis developed the theory of a twofold Messiah, one in a state of poverty and suffering, the other in glory and splendor.

This view postulated that one would be born as Messiah ben Joseph, of the tribe of Ephraim. He would fight against Gog and be slain by Armillus. The other would be Messiah ben David, of the tribe of Judah. He would overcome and kill Armillus, resurrect the first Messiah, assemble all Israel to Palestine, and rule all nations with a rod of iron from Jerusalem. I suspect this expedience was adopted because of a mistaken view of the nature of the heavenly kingdom, which never was intended to be a kingdom of this world. An earthly monarchy requires an earthly monarch, and one who conceives of an earthly kingdom must invent an earthly king.

My purpose in mentioning this is neither to analyze or to criticize. It is simply to show that the position I occupy as to the

personality of the Messiah is in harmony with ancient Judaism. It is the modern Jew who has departed from the traditional view. It is one of the anomalies of our meeting that many of the Jews here present have forsaken the very basis of primitive Judaism, while I am a firm defender of it. What a switch it is that, on the grounds of the faith of your fathers, I am the Jew and you are the non-Jew!

Let me again affirm that all of the ancient Jews held the concept of a personal Messiah, coming with power and in the glory of God. Even those later rabbis who sought to harmonize what they considered irreconcilable prophetic statements did not abandon the idea of a personal Messiah, but came up with two persons instead of one.

FALSE MESSIAHS

The real reason why some of you no longer believe in a personal Messiah is that you no longer regard the Jewish Scriptures as genuine revelation. In your view, the prophets were not sent from God; they were simply perceptive individuals with deeper social consciousness, rebelling against the culture. I regard them as holy men of God who spoke as they were motivated by the Spirit of God.

The pseudo-Messiahs, who have periodically risen and obtained such a following, are a testimony to the Jewish belief in, and a yearning for, a personal Messiah. Just as there can be no counterfeit without the genuine coin, so there could be no false Messiah without at least a concept of a genuine Messiah. If false Messiahs have been accepted because they are persons, this is indicative that the Messsiah expected on the ground of prophetic revelation is conceived of as a person.

Beginning with Coziba, who changed his name to Bar Cochba, there have been more than two dozen false Messiahs. Simon Bar Cochba is a good example of how the Jewish people

have been willing to follow a man. When Emperor Hadrian undertook to Romanize Judea in the year 132, a revolution was sparked, and this projected Coziba into a position of leadership at once. He proclaimed himself to be the "Star" mentioned by Balaam (Numbers 24:17). He declared that he was sent from Heaven to overthrow Roman tyranny and restore the liberty and glory of the nation. Akiba ben Joseph, one of the most influential rabbis of that day, declared that Bar Cochba, which means "Son of the Star," was the Messiah and King of the Jews. Almost half a million Jews rallied to his call. They defeated the Romans under Finnius Rufus, capturing more than fifty towns.

Hadrian then summoned his most famous general, Julius Severus, and after a long and bitter struggle the Jews were defeated. Bar Cochba was killed at Bethar in August, 135. Half a million Jews were killed. Thousands of women and children were sold into slavery. The harsh measures of the Romans forced hundreds of thousands of Jews to flee Palestine. This was the final exile, or dispersal, which left Palestine under alien rule until the Republic of Israel was formed in 1948, the very same year that you began meeting.

Time would fail me to tell of Moses Cretensis, Ishmael Sophus, Salomo Macho, or Sabbatai Sevi, all of whom proclaimed themselves to be the Messiah, only to bring woe upon those who followed them. My point is simply that, since these men claimed to be the Messiah, it is obvious that they believed in a personal Messianic figure. Since so many regarded each in his turn as the Messiah proves that the people also regarded the Messiah as a man. This proves nothing about the deluded claims of messiahship. It does prove that I am not alone in interpreting the Messianic Scriptures as alluding to a man.

MESSIANIC PROPHECY

As I approach the matter of specifying the grounds upon

which I assume the Messiah to be a person, I will cite the unadorned statements of the prophets. These convinced all of your fathers that the Messiah was to be a person, not a moral code, system, or an ethical principle. This testimony was so conclusive that many rabbis of several centuries ago believed the Messiah had come. They thought He remained concealed because the sins of the Jews disqualified them to receive Him.

In 1590, the very learned chief rabbi of Vienna, Simon Luzzato, said of the predictions of Daniel, "The consequence of a too extended and profound investigation on the part of Jewish scholars would be that they would all become Christians; for it could not be denied that, according to Daniel's limitation of the time, the Messiah must already have appeared." I think I have never read a more revealing statement.

I would like to produce the prediction of Israel himself, that prince of God who was called Jacob originally. He became the father of twelve sons, and these became the heads of the twelve tribes. The life of Jacob was an eventful one. When he was introduced to the pharaoh of Egypt by his son Joseph, he told that monarch, "Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage" (Genesis 47:9).

When this aged patriarch sensed that death was approaching, with the characteristic attitude of a desert sheik he summoned his family to his bedside. Calling his sons to him he said, "Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days" (49:1). With a prescience given by God, he then issued prophetic forecasts of the nature and fate of each tribe, beginning with Reuben, the eldest son. Jacob said that Judah would be especially reverenced by his brethren. He would be successful in battle against his enemies, and would earn the respect of the other tribes. His forecast begins, "Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise" (49:8). There is a

play on words here, since "Judah" means praise, as you know. It was like saying, "Judah, your name is praise, and praised you will be." If you are familiar with the Jerusalem Targum, you will recall the free translation, "Judah, to thee shall all thy brethren confess, and by thy name shall all Jews be called."

For the sake of time, we will pass by the portrayal of the tribe of Judah in its three stages of development, referred to by Jacob under the symbol of a young lion, a mature lion, and an old lion. Perhaps the reference is to the tribal status in three eras, the first under judges or deliverers, the second under David, and the third under Solomon. It is interesting for me to see that, in depicting the standards of the tribes, Jewish artists portray a lion on the standard of Judah. Early Jewish Christians referred to Jesus as "the lion of the tribe of Judah."

THE SCEPTER

I now come to Genesis 49:10, which I consider to be one of the most important passages in the Scriptures relating to the Messiah. Let me quote the words of Jacob: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." I want to analyze this point by point, mindful as I do so that there are excellent scholars present, most of whom are opposed to my position.

What is the scepter? Whatever it was, it was not to depart from the tribe of Judah until the Shiloh came. The word *shebet* signifies primarily "rod" or "staff." It was employed for that with which a master might beat a slave (Exodus 21:20); for a father to punish his son (Proverbs 23:13); for a farmer to beat out his grain (Isaiah 28:27); and for a shepherd to herd and mark his sheep (Leviticus 27:32).

Since a king carried a short rod or staff as a badge of authority, *shebet* is also translated "scepter" in passages like

Psalm 45:6. Thus it came to be applied to the rulers, and then by extension to the tribes over which they ruled or presided. No doubt this stemmed from the phenomenon described in Numbers 17:2, 3. A dispute had arisen over Aaron's exclusive right to the special priesthood. God instructed the head of each tribe to take a rod and write his name upon it. The rods were collected by Moses and laid up in the tabernacle all night. The next morning it was found that Aaron's rod had budded, blossomed, and produced almonds. The right of the tribe of Levi to the priesthood was thus decided. The word for "rod" gradually began to be applied to the tribes. It came to be the symbol of tribal identity. I believe it is in that sense it is used here. The intimation is that some of the tribes would lose their identity before the Shiloh came. They would disappear or be amalgamated, but the tribe of Judah would be identifiable. A consequence of this is of tremendous significance. It follows logically that if the tribal identity of Judah can be established no longer, if the tribe itself cannot be isolated, and if Jews cannot prove their tribal relationship to it, the Shiloh must have come. If the existence of a thing, state, or condition is made contingent upon the coming of a certain person or event, it would seem that when that thing or state no longer exists, it is *prima facie* **evidence that the other has come.**

The staff of tribal identity would not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver go forth from between his feet, until Shiloh came. "Lawgiver" is from *mehokek,* **as you know. It refers to a maker of statutes, a teacher of legal precepts. All of us are aware that Moses, who pronounced statutes, judgments, and commandments to the people, was of the tribe of Levi. When Israel wanted knowledge of the law they did not go to Judah. They went to the priests and Levites. No maker of statutes ever proceeded from the loins of Judah, and none was to do so until Shiloh arrived. This suggests that the Shiloh would be a teacher of commandments and that He would supersede Moses. The statutes would come from Judah and not from Levi. We can see how important the Shiloh was to be.**

Let me make a positive statement, and you may feel free to examine it at your leisure. All believers in the revelation of God among the ancient Jews unqualifiedly accepted this as a Messianic prediction. The chief of the Targumists actually translated it thus. The Chaldean Version rendered it, "One having principality shall not be taken from the house of Judah, nor a scribe from his children's children, until the Messiah come, whose the kingdom is." The Jerusalem Targum renders it, "Kings shall not fail from the house of Judah, nor skilful *[sic]* **doctors of the law from their children's children, till the time when King Messiah shall come."**

While I differ from the interpretation placed on some of the phraseology by the ancient Targumists, we are in absolute agreement that the reference is to the coming of the Messiah.

Please pardon this interruption. I am a visitor today and am not a Jew. I do not know what you mean by the Targums.

You are certainly welcome, and so is your question. The word targum is an Aramaic term meaning "interpretation." When Hebrew ceased to be spoken generally by the Jews in Babylon and Palestine, and was supplanted by Aramaic, the common people could not understand the Scriptures in the original. Accordingly, the scribes and teachers began to paraphrase in the Aramaic tongue, and these paraphrases were used for study and instruction the synagogues. The Targums are explanations of the meaning of Scriptures as understood in that day. But the Targumists relied upon tradition as well as the written word.

Only a small portion of the great mass of oral Targums survived. Those that did furnish us material on many parts of the Scriptures. The Jerusalem Targum, from which I quoted, is an incomplete one on the Pentateuch. It is important because it establishes the fact that the traditional and accepted view of Genesis 49:10 was that the Shiloh was to be the Messiah.

Now, what is the meaning of *Shiloh?* The root *shalah* means "to be quiet, secure, or peaceful." The Shiloh was to be the pacifier, the peacemaker. He was the one who would reconcile, mediate, and produce tranquillity. I happen to believe that the aged Jacob was permitted by Heaven to foretell the coming of Him who would be God's agent for restoring peace and harmony. This peacemaker was to come from the tribe of Judah. He was to succeed Moses as a statute-bringer. With His coming, tribal differences and distinctions would pass away.

I submit to you that the Shiloh was to be a person, not a system, organization, or ethical code of values. The patriarch was explicit. To *him* would the gathering of the people be. I concur with all of the Jewish interpreters of yesterday, the wise men of old, that the Shiloh was to be the Messiah, God's anointed one, bringing peace and reconciliation to a ripped-off world. I cannot see how anyone reading objectively can deduce logically that it speaks of anything but a person who was to come and achieve the divine purpose. I realize that I am reading it some twenty centuries after Jesus came, but I trust that I am not reading back into it merely my own yearnings.

The arrangement of God with your fathers was temporary. The covenant given at Mount Sinai never was intended to be universal or timeless. It was to lead and protect those who believed in monotheism until the great Lawgiver and Peacemaker should arrive. Tribal distinctions were not merely arbitrary or capricious. They were purposeful and prophetic. The standard of Judah would not disappear until the scion of David came. Moses would be eclipsed by the Messiah. The love of law would give way to the law of love. If Jacob spoke the truth, and if the Shiloh of whom he spoke was the Messiah, no Jew can be faithful to Jacob and refuse to accept the Messiah when He is identified.

What you have said today may interest a student of the Torah, which I'm not. But so far you haven't said one thing to convince

me that the Messiah was Jesus, and I don't think you can.

Thank you for your statement. Bless your heart, I'd feel a lot better if you *were* a student of the Torah. I am sure you study your insurance manuals, for you are a successful broker. But the Torah was given to help men live, and an insurance salesman ought to be especially interested in that. But please remember that in these statements I did not set out to prove that Jesus was the Messiah. My task, based upon the prior question, was to show that the Messiah was to be a person, not a system or cultural code. If the Messiah was not to be a person, it would be absurd to point to any person as the Messiah. When Moses Mendelssohn, the "German Socrates," translated the Torah and other sections of the Bible into German in 1783, he paved the way for the Jews to rid themselves of their ghetto parochialism and enter the European community, where they imbibed the modern spirit. Unfortunately, as I view it, this first modern champion of Jewish emancipation had become the captive of German rationalism, and opened the door for modernism as well as for modern living. There is a difference between being rational and being rationalistic. The first is the correct exercise of the mental powers; the second is the exercise of a definite bias in the use of those powers.

Mendelssohn laid the foundation upon which Abraham Geiger advanced the reform movement while serving as rabbi in Breslau, from 1840 to 1863. A majority of you are affiliated with this school of thought, and no longer regard the Torah as a real law from God. You seek only ethical considerations, and while I am sure some of you would deny it, in the final analysis you make every man his own Torah. You no longer look for a personal Messiah, but are content to believe that peace and brotherhood will result from universal dissemination of the principles and attitudes embraced in Jewish thought. This is your "Messiah."

If you will be patient and understanding of my bluntness, I

would like to say I am persuaded that you will not only resent any proof I may present that Jesus is the Messiah, but some of you will resist the very thought of a personal Messiah. Neither resentment nor resistance will change my feeling toward you, nor diminish my love for you. Dr. Marcus Bach wrote a book entitled *The Will To Believe.* **I suppose we must take into account that the negative corollary to this is the will not to believe. I do not have a desire to impose my own convictions upon you. What I propose to do is to lay out before you the basis of my own faith. You can then examine it and determine if it is valid. The final judge for all of us is the God of glory.**

If you come to believe that the promised Messiah was a person, it seems to me that you will either need to accept the claim of Jesus to be that Messiah, or surrender your hope. If Jesus is not the Messiah, there will never be another who can stake out a claim to that right. Jesus fulfilled the prophecies as no other ever did or can. Alfred Edersheim was a learned Jew who came to believe that Jesus was the Messiah. In September 1883, in a preface to his volumes, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah,* **he wrote, "Lord, to whom shall we go? The words of eternal life hast Thou!"**

It seems to me it would be impossible for any person now to establish his own descent from the tribe of Judah. Not one of you present can identify yourself as to your original tribal ancestry. I know that Mr. Cohen, who sits at the table, can argue from his name, which means "priest," that he must be a descendant of the tribe of Levi. But that cannot be proven in view of the fact that the conquerors of the Jews imposed upon them priests from other tribes. In some cases, the Jews themselves chose people from other tribes to minister because those of the tribe of Levi refused to mingle idolatry with service to the true and living God. The scepter has departed from Judah. Surely, then, the Shiloh has come.

Is it not strange that the first persons on earth to accept the

claims of Jesus were all Jews? They had seen Him personally. They knew His life and works. Thousands of them from every walk of life pledged their allegiance to Him. Many priests, the teachers of the Torah and the arbiters of the people, embraced the faith that was first proclaimed only to Jews and by Jews. If those who knew Him best accepted Him, upon what ground can those who know Him least reject Him? Surely we cannot argue that these Jews were ignorant. They were not a mere rabble. They knew of the schools of Shammai and Hillel, taught in the temple precincts. Every synagogue was a school where the sacred teachings were inculcated. Both the promises of God and the traditions of the rabbis relating to the Messiah were freely discussed. In regarding Jesus as the Messiah, I am not anti-Jewish. Instead, I take my place with the thousands of Jews who were part of the Messianic synagogues.

It is indeed regrettable that we have allowed ourselves to be maneuvered into opposing camps. Each of us needs the insights of all the rest of us. All of us are smarter than any one of us! What do we have to lose by sitting at the same table and bending our heads together over the pages of the Torah, seeking to drink deep of the waters of life? I revere the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I accept Him as the one God. I regard every word that He addressed to your fathers as sacred. Though they may be your fathers in the flesh, they are my fathers in faith. It is because of these Scriptures that I regard Jesus as the Messiah. I have no strange volume from which to draw my conclusions. I read from the same text that you read from every Sabbath and is taught in your temple Sunday schools.

My time is expired, and I apologize for running over a little bit. But before I close, let me remind you that I have the other part of the question that was posed, which is to give my reasons for believing that the ethical values of Judaism, great as they are, can never secure peace and brotherhood in the world. In this regard it does not fall behind or show itself to be inferior to any code of human behavior on earth. In fact, I regard it as

God-given. I respect it for what it has accomplished in the lives of those who have subscribed to it. I will deal with this further. Until we meet again, then, may the God who created Heaven and earth and all things therein be your shield and buckler. May He lead you beside still waters. May He lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace. Shalom!

Judaism As the Messiah

Contents

It is a privilege to be with you, and I note with pleasure that two of you have brought your wives. Let me compliment you both for marrying women who look so much younger than yourselves. My good friend in the realm of jurisprudence has asked permission to make a statement and pose a question before I address you on the theme for today.

I have listened to you as carefully as I would to an attorney pleading a case in court. It was my hope that I might hear something of importance, something worthwhile. I confess my disappointment. You have presented your own position a little more cleverly than others, you are fluent and persuasive, but underneath it all is the unprovable idea that Jesus was the Messiah. I understand that you refer to Him as "The Prince of Peace." There has been no peace since He was born. He has not brought peace in any century. If, when the Messiah comes, He is to bring peace, what kind of Messiah is it who has seen more bloody wars since He came than ever occurred before?

Thank you, Your Honor. You are plain and positive in your statements. One does not need to speculate about your meaning, and I respect that fact. If you achieve nothing else, you will make me a better man. I shall try to avoid arrest, lest I be brought into your court. This is a forum of free men. You must feel under no compulsion to agree with me against your conscience. Your Honor will no doubt recall the statement by Judge Learned Hand, in the *Oliver Wendell Holmes Lecture,* at

Harvard in 1958: "In the end it is worse to suppress dissent than to run the risk of heresy."

Your Honor, you have put your finger on a real problem. I have no intention to evade it. I will face it as squarely as I can. But with your permission I will attend to the prior issue, and when I have dealt with it, I will return to your question.

I am to examine whether or not Judaism, as a system involving ethical or moral values, can ever achieve on earth the state of things regarded by the prophets as "the kingdom of God." In doing so, I shall give some attention to why I think there was a grave change in modern Jewish thought from the traditional concept of a personal Messiah. I recognize that many of your Orthodox brethren would "rather fight than switch." They still cling to the hope of a personal Messiah, a hope that you have surrendered.

You are not responsible for the change of thought. You inherited it. You are responsible, however, for examining it critically to see whether or not it is the truth. As Henri Amiel put it in his *Journal,* "Truth above all, even when it upsets and overwhelms us." I want to explore with you today the roots, growth, and fruits of the system of thought that has enticed so many of you to abandon the faith of your fathers. I realize that you regard your present position as a sign of maturity. You feel that you have outgrown, intellectually, the ideas with which your predecessors were comfortable. You no longer need the "security blankets" that you think were woven of myth and fantasy in a childhood age of the world.

I am not so sure you have improved your position. It is possible for man to shiver in the nakedness of despair, if he casts aside the covering that I believe God prepared for him. And I think that both Jews and non-Jews in our day are victims of forces that operated before we were born, to sell a man on the idea that he is his own God, and outside of him there is no other.

I am not so foolish as to deny that history often is shaped by its recording more than by happening. Both the one who writes and the one who reads the record interpret it. You may disagree with my interpretation and violently oppose it, but that will not upset me one bit. My love for you will not be abated by your lack of concurrence. Your conformity with my views is not a condition of my addressing you.

VICTIMS OF PHILOSOPHY

Both Jews and non-Jews played a part on the stage of reason that served to minimize faith and maximize human rationality. Although rationalism had its origin in Greek philosophic thought, in its modern sense it was first explicitly stated by the French scientist, Rene Descartes, who died in 1650. A devout Roman Catholic, he rejected, however, the method of scholasticism. He enunciated this principle: "In our search for the direct road to truth, we should busy ourselves about no object about which we cannot attain a certitude equal to that of the demonstrations of arithmetic and geometry." Descartes determined to hold nothing true until he had established ground for believing it true. As alluring as this seems, a little thought will show that it will eventually eliminate faith as a vital element in human action.

The Cartesian philosophy greatly affected Baruch Spinoza, who was born in Amsterdam, where he was educated carefully in Jewish theology. When Spinoza developed his philosophy, he became alienated from Orthodox Judaism and withdrew from the synagogue. He was excommunicated by the rabbis, who secured also his banishment from the city. Living in abject poverty outside the urban sprawl, and supporting himself by grinding optical lenses, Spinoza wrote tracts and treatises. These eventually served to inspire some well-known philosophers and poets, among whom were Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, William Wordsworth, and Percy Bysshe Shelley.

I have not the time, nor do you the interest or patience, to review the writings of Spinoza. Perhaps his greatest work was *Ethics Demonstrated With Geometrical Order.* **None of us can know to what lengths others will carry our thinking when we are gone. No doubt Spinoza, who died in 1677 at the age of forty-five, would be astounded if he could return to our world and see some of the material that is credited to the principles he enunciated.**

Before Spinoza's death, the writings of Descartes had affected the thinking of a brilliant German baron, Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibnitz. He discovered the fundamental principles of infinitesimal calculus in 1675. Seven years later, he invented a calculating machine capable of performing operations in multiplication, division, and extraction of square root. It was with von Leibnitz that the rationalistic concept entered Germany. Here it was destined to become systematized by Baron Christian von Wolff, who brought it into sharp controversy with the existing ideas about God's revelation.

From the roots of this philosophy grew the religious system called Deism, which eventually was espoused by our own statesmen, George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Jefferson. Deists, however, designates a group of British writers of the eighteenth century who rejected the belief in a revelation from God. It was their contention that by an understanding of nature, and through employment of human reason, an individual may determine for himself the religious idea suitable for an expression of his personality. Scripture, to the rationalist, was not a revelation from God. It was the historical record of man's own striving for meaning in the world of his existence. Miracles were ruled out.

With the advent of the evolutionary theory, the need for an intelligent Creator to explain the origin of the universe was eliminated. It was but one step more in the direction toward the humanism of our day, in which man becomes his own God, and

human reason is enshrined as the ultimate criterion of morality and influence.

TAINTED THEOLOGY

All of these pursuits affected the entire theological realm, so-called. They sharply divided the Protestant segment, eventually influenced Catholicism, and infiltrated the thought of Jewish intellectuals. The result was an abandonment by many of the very principles that had given your people hope and continuity during centuries of persecution and suffering. As a result of drinking from a stream that had been poisoned, you became infected with the same virus that afflicted a great part of the loosely dubbed Christian world.

So that I shall not be charged with exaggeration, or with building a case out of cobwebs, let me tell you what was taught when I attended the School of Judaism, as the only non-Jew enrolled. The eminent rabbi suggested that Moses was a clever political manipulator. He took advantage of a conveniently occurring earthquake, accompanied by a thunderstorm, to go up on top of Mount Sinai and remain hidden for almost six weeks. Afterward he came down with a couple of rocks he had chiseled and passed off as sacred stones. This was an imitation of some of the heathen priests of that day. This was the origin of the Torah, according to one of your most brilliant instructors. It is no wonder that wild, pie-eyed thinkers, like the author of *Chariots of the Gods,* would postulate that the ark of the covenant was actually a receiving set for messages from outer space, with the cherubims on the mercy seat acting like antennae to pick up transmissions from other planets.

This kind of thinking was not original with the rabbi. It was absorbed by him in a theological school. The same thing is taught in Protestant seminaries, which really do not deserve the designation, since they no longer *protest* anything. Some of them

exhibit the truth of the adage, "If you do not stand for something, you will fall for anything!"

If you can tolerate me for saying it, I hold that your philosophers and thinkers, like those in the modern non-Jewish world, became victimized by both naturalism and humanism. Their denial of the supernatural betrayed them into the renunciation of a personal and intelligent First Cause as the source of life and being. God became only a nonpersonal force, something like magnetism or electricity, unexplainable and yet handy for us. Albert Einstein stated this position clearly when he asserted that he did not believe in a God who rewards good and punishes evil. He stated, "The presence of a superior reasoning power . . . revealed in the incomprehensible universe forms my idea of God."

Scrapping the idea of a personal God who could reveal His will and purpose also washed down the drain the hope for a personal Messiah. To some, the prophets became mere idle dreamers or fanatical enthusiasts. The sacred Scriptures were no longer sacred. Max Nordeau said of the Bible, "We find collected in this book the superstitious beliefs of the ancient inhabitants of Palestine, with indistinct echoes from Indian and Persian fables, mistaken imitations of Egyptian theories and customs, historical chronicles as dry as they are unreliable, and miscellaneous poems, amatory, human, and Jewish-national, which are rarely distinguished by beauties of the highest order, but frequently by superfluity of expression, coarseness, bad taste, and genuine Oriental sensuality."

Some of you still entertain a hope of "saving" mankind, and many of you do not. For those who do, that hope is centered on an emphasis on social justice and equity, which you believe is inherent in Judaic cultural thought. Before I discuss this further, let me make three of my convictions clear.

1. I do not deprecate the need for social justice. I contend

for it as sincerely as you do.

2. I do not deny the great contribution made by Jewish thought in this field.

3. I do not believe that any code of human ethics, regardless of its magnitude, can ever unite the world.

Judaism cannot transform the world. **My first reason for believing that the ethical code of Judaism cannot transform the world spiritually is that it failed to transform your fathers. Even in a locked-in culture, separated and segregated from the heathen around them, they did not practice the moral values you project. Instead, they were constantly rebuked by the prophets for immorality, cupidity, and idolatry of the grossest kind. It would seem to me that, if there were a redemptive value in the system based on the Torah and haftarah, it would have exhibited itself under the circumstances that then obtained. Instead, the opposite was the case, and the people stoned the very prophets who called for justice and mercy.**

Judaism is not effective. **If a moral code had no effect when there was at least a nominal belief in and respect for God, on what grounds can we assume that it will have the desired effect when responsibility to God has been abrogated? The strength of any moral code is the authority behind it. If the only authority is that of consensus, and if modern man thinks of himself as a mere animal, a trousered ape, then consensus is simply "the law of the pack." The survival of the fittest will become the law of the future.**

Judaism cannot forgive sin. **Man exhibits universally a sense of alienation. He is alienated from the very world of mankind itself, and he exhibits it in hostility. He is at odds with himself, and he knows the anguish of a battlefield inside his own spirit. The problem is sin, which is ignored and even denied in our day of theorization. Sin separates from God. It leaves man dangling**

hopelessly over a cliff from which he cannot claw his way back to solid ground.

In one of our after-sessions, some of you challenged the very concept of sin. One of you quoted the statement of Oscar Wilde that there is no sin except stupidity. If that were true, the author of the aphorism would be the chief of sinners. Although he was educated at Trinity College in Dublin, and Magdalen College in Oxford, he ended up arraigned and convicted on a charge of sodomy. He served two years in prison, after which he fled from Great Britain. He finished out his unhappy days under the assumed name of Sebastian Melmoth. Laughing at sin does not eliminate it. Treating it lightly no more eradicates it than scoffing at smallpox makes that disease go away. Sin is an offense against the majesty of God. It is the attempt of the created to dethrone the Creator and inject himself into His place. Until man is reconciled to God, he cannot be reconciled to others. No code of behavior can produce that reconciliation because it cannot provide forgiveness. If I agree to pay cash from now on, that does not take care of my debts contracted in the past.

It seems absurd to act as if there is no God, when there is an innate sense crying out that there must be. Only a personal Messiah, assuring a love so deep that it transcends all other considerations, can bring healing. Moral codes, regardless of how good they may be, only produce frustration in the unforgiven. They tend to increase the guilt consciousness by the very futility of attempting to live up to them.

Judaism cannot provide an ideal. **Man needs an ideal toward which he can strive, by which he can be challenged. That ideal cannot be found in a mere moral code. Such a code only encourages one to become his own ideal. Man knows he is not ideal, and his abject failure in seeking justification by law enforces the thought. The world will never be brought to a sense of oneness until there is a central figure in the universe, recognized as Lord of all, exemplifying all that is best in**

mankind. We follow leaders, and as we do we move in a common direction toward a common goal.

You postulate that man will become better by education, and I would never speak disparagingly of education. Aristotle declared, "All who have meditated on the art of governing mankind have been convinced that the fate of empires depends on the education of youth. Educated men are as much superior to uneducated men as the living are to the dead." Yet, unless the heart is changed, and the inner being given a new sense of direction, education increases our problem instead of alleviating it. An educated criminal is the worst kind of criminal, and an educated fool is the worst kind of fool. You will argue that moral education is not within such a category, and you may be right. Still, education in moral values, without a spiritual regeneration to enable a person to attain such values, may only aggravate the human predicament. Furnishing a book on survival to a man at the bottom of a well is not the answer to his problem. What he needs is a rope let down from above by a hand that is powerful enough to lift him up. Man can learn better how to live when he knows what life is and where it is. There must be a point of reference.

It is not the mere teaching of law, but the teaching of the law as of God, that makes the difference. The *Torah* without the *Shema* is simply another form of philosophy. To your pious fathers, the knowledge of God was everything. To know God was to know the very secret of life. The word of God was given to a covenant people. It had to be taught, not simply to make life easier or happier, but to enable those who learned to exhibit the qualities of a people adopted by God and brought into covenant relationship with Him.

The Jews have been dispersed throughout the nations of the world. I mention this as a fact of history. I do not condone, but rather deplore, the unfortunate persecutions and captivities that have sometimes caused it. Yet the Jews never have

converted a single nation. The Judaic principle never has transformed a people, except as it has reached it fulfillment in the Christian faith. Based upon the past, there is no real ground for expecting the leaven of Judaism to affect the world lump for good.

I am bound by conviction to reject the hope of world transformation and peace, except on the basis of acceptance of the divine penetration in the person of the Messiah. The Messiah who was promised by your prophets and seers cannot be a system or a code. It was for this reason that Isaiah declared, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." As you are aware, I believe that the Messiah has come, and I believe it upon the testimony of Jews. All that I know about Jesus, with very few exceptions, I have learned from Jews. During His life span upon earth, Jesus only once crossed over the Palestinian border. He was reared by Jews, He lived and associated with Jews, and sent His chosen representatives during His lifetime only to Jews. Jews were dispatched to Jews, and forbidden to go to *goyim.*

My conviction results from what Jewish prophets foretold, and from the testimony of Jewish nationals that it was fulfilled. I come, then, with no non-Jewish propaganda to try to influence you to accept a non-Jewish faith as valid. I believe that "salvation is of the Jews," if I may borrow that phrase. I do not believe that it stems from anything the Jews have yet to offer, although they have much to give. I believe it is from Someone whom they have already given, and from the recognition that He is the atonement and our hope.

Jesus did not come to destroy the Torah, but to fulfill it. I do not believe that a Jew who accepts Him as the Messiah denies the Torah, but becomes fulfilled in the goal of the Torah.

What you are asking me to do is to turn my back upon my best friends, deny my parents and accept another religion, which means nothing to me. What would I gain by doing that? I would

be crazy to fall for that!

I know it is very difficult for any of us to listen dispassionately when the very inner being is in revolt against what we think is an attempt to sway us. I am happy that you have such an emotional reaction, for it demonstrates that you think very deeply about matters relating to your life. Perhaps it will help you a little if I point out that you are mistaken on three counts. I am not asking you to turn your back upon any friend whom you cherish. I am not asking you to deny your beloved parents. Surely you could not do that. I am not asking you to accept another religion at all.

The fact is, I do not believe that Jesus came to bring another religion into the world. He is not the author of a new religion. When He came, your fathers had a good religion, and He participated in it. He was circumcised on the eighth day, presented in the temple, and made His *bar mitzvah.* **It turned into a gala occasion, with all of His friends and relatives going up to Jerusalem to celebrate it. Jesus attended the synagogue meetings, participated in the reading of the haftarah in His home synagogue, and generally conducted himself as an** *iluy,* **a scholar.**

The religion of your fathers was a good religion. It was God-given. It had all of the ritual, liturgy and pontifical majesty generally associated with religion. But Jesus came to put an end to religion as an approach to God. He came to make possible a *relationship* **instead of a** *religion.* **He came to offer men a new dimension of life, the life of God, the abundant life.**

It is true that when I accepted the offer of life on the God level, I was deserted by some of my friends. They deserted me, however. I did not leave them. I loved them more intensely than before. I had been reared in a background where men still sought to please God, or to placate Him, by stated and stately performances conducted by a clergy, or special priesthood. I

gave it up for *life!* My mother thought I had lost my mind. My companions thought I was "off my rocker." But I was confronted with the historical fact of Jesus. My very integrity demanded that I accept Him. The attitude of my loved ones toward me is a matter between themselves and God. One cannot choose the consequences of his acts. He can only respond and accept the consequences.

You ask me what you would gain by becoming a disciple of Jesus. I can answer that question only by telling you what I have experienced. I have gained an inner sense of peace, of justification and acquittal. Jesus of Nazareth has been the bridge over troubled waters. He has made me to lie down in green pastures. He has restored my soul. Once I sought acquittal upon the basis of my own goodness. My righteousness was an attempt to be good by law, to be perfect by precept. Then I learned that God sent Jesus to be my righteousness. What I needed was to trust in Him.

I have gained a freedom to love all men, even my enemies. One has to be free to do that. Although we are grown men from varied backgrounds, professional men in the community, pragmatic, practical, and sometimes hard-nosed, I can say unashamedly that I love you. I do not love you because you are good. I do not love you because I am good. I love you because our Father loves you. He loves you as you are, not because you are the people He would have you to be. That is also the way He loves me. He paid sin's penalty for all of us, and thus made the divine overture of love. I accept that overture.

Because I am firmly committed to His nature and approach, I make the overture of love to all of you. I do not ask that you come to me. I come to you. I do not ask that you love me. I simply say that I love you. I shall continue to do so. I yearn for all of you to be my brothers, not in that washed-out, faded kind of sense in which we are caught up together in the human perspective, but in the real sense of being members of one

family. Let me make it clear to you, however, that the price of my regard for you is not that you accept what I say. I shall love you regardless of how you react to my words.

I ask you not to fall for anything that you think would make you less responsible, or lacking in intelligence. The implication that you would be crazy to fall for what I am saying is based upon your failure to grasp the implication of what I say. It is my hope that, as we continue to think and study together, I may clarify this matter. We have a wide chasm, across which I seek to throw slender threads of thought to make it possible for us to bridge the expanse. We have not touched upon our problems very deeply.

You will recall your old saying, "The Torah has no bottom." Learning as an art has a place of beginning, but there is no end to it. I do not want to be an *amorets,* **an ignoramus, and neither do you. The Talmud has a saying, "Better a learned bastard than an ignorant priest." I am not anxious to be either of the two, but I would like to see all of us sit at "East Wall." I crave for all of you that you shall be** *sheyneh yidn,* **beautiful Jews, in the fullest meaning of that term, orderly, dignified, and harmonious. To this end I pray for you, and ask your prayers in my behalf as well.**

The Prince of Peace

Contents

While traveling through the country, have you ever turned off on a side road, and found the scenery more attractive than that along the main highway? I think that is what has happened to some of us today. Those of us who arrived early for the forum have been holding a rap session, as the "now" generation puts it. I confess that the subject of our informal talk may be more intriguing than the things I came prepared to say.

One of the number voiced the idea that the coming of Jesus, who claimed to be the Messiah, may have taken the world by surprise. This seemed to be the consensus of opinion. While I hesitate to appear as an oddball, I have to differ. The fact is that one can prove by historians, quite apart from the New Testament writers, that the world was in a state of expectancy and anticipation. People were looking for one to come as an answer to predictions that had been made, someone who would "put it all together."

Let me mention in connection with this the name of Flavius Josephus. Among all those I have met so far during these meetings, I am the only person who has read his complete works. I not only read them, but underlined numerous passages I wanted to remember.

Josephus, who was the son of Matthias, in the priestly order, was born about four years after the death of Jesus of Nazareth. He was present at the siege of Jerusalem by Titus, and

many times walked about outside the walls exhorting the besieged to surrender. After the capture of the city, he returned to Rome with Titus, and there wrote his treatises on *Jewish Antiquities and Wars of the Jews.* **In the latter history, he records an abortive effort of the Jews, led by a weaver named Jonathan, which occurred two years after the fall of the city. He attributes the fanatical attempt to a fervent expectation of the Jews that their Messiah was to come. Here are his words: "The chief thing which invited them to that war was an ambiguous prophecy found in the Holy Scriptures, that, about that time, one of their country should be monarch of the whole world."**

Josephus was a political opportunist. Since he wrote under the patronage of the emperor, he declared that his countrymen were deceived in their interpretation of the oracle, and that the allusion was to Vespasian. The Romans, however, also had the same opinion current among them, and it was known throughout the Greek world. Let me cite two historians in proof of this, although I hope you will not think I am imposing a history class upon those of you who dreamed of getting out of school and away from that.

The first of these is Tacitus, whose full name was Caius Cornelius Tacitus. In 78 he married the daughter of Julius Agricola, the famous consul whose governorship of Britain was so outstanding. Tacitus received many political honors, being praetor of Rome under Domitian, and consul under Nerva. His writings, which brought him renown, included a history of the Roman Empire from the year 69 to the assassination of Domitian in 96. Of particular interest to me are his *Annals,* **probably consisting of sixteen books originally, about half of which are still available.**

It is in the fifteenth volume that Tacitus reveals a great deal about the Christians, whom Nero blamed for the conflagration that ravaged more than two-thirds of the city of Rome. I cannot refrain from one quotation:

"But neither all human help nor the liberality of the Emperor, nor all the atonements presented to the gods, availed to abate the infamy he lay under of having ordered the city to be set on fire. To suppress, therefore, the common rumor, Nero procured others to be accused, and inflicted exquisite punishments upon those people, who were in abhorrence for their crimes, and were commonly known by the name of Christians. They had their denomination from Christus, who in the reign of Tiberius was put to death as a criminal by the procurator Pontius Pilate."

This alone is sufficient to give the lie to those who deny the authenticity of the record of the disciples of Jesus. The most eminent pagan historian validates the origin and spread of the Christian faith, and becomes a witness to the time and nature of the death of Jesus. Let no one again urge against the faith of those of us who accept Jesus as the Messiah, that there is no historical basis for it outside of what they designate "prejudiced accounts" contained in the New Testament.

Tacitus hated the Christians. He was a pagan and an idolater. It is for that reason his testimony is so valuable. In describing the reason why the Jews resisted the might of the Roman army, he declares in his *Historiae,* **"But the most had a strong persuasion that it was said in the ancient writings held by the priest, that at that very time the East should prevail, and that someone who would come from Judea should obtain the empire of the world."**

The second historian I will mention is Suetonius, whose full name was Gains Suetonius Tranquillus. Suetonius was in a position to gain inside information, for he was a good friend of Pliny the Younger, a governor of Bithynia. He was private secretary to the Emperor Trajan until dismissed from office in the year 121. Suetonius was a prolific author, but none of his books remain except *Lives of the First Twelve Caesars,* **and a fragmentary work of biography dealing with the stories of**

outstanding orators.

It was in his record of the life of Vespasian that he mentioned "the ambiguous oracle," referred to by Josephus and Tacitus. He writes, "There had been for a long time all over the East a prevailing opinion that it was in the fates that at the time someone from Judea should obtain the empire of the world. By the event, it appeared that a Roman emperor was meant by that prediction. The Jews applying it to themselves went into a rebellion."

It is my very decided conviction that the writings of the prophets, translated into Greek and circulated all over the Roman Empire, constituted the so-called "ambiguous oracle." Daniel had accurately predicted the time when the Messiah would make His advent. It is thus no wonder to me that poets and other scholars in the Roman Empire were in such a state of expectancy that Virgil, who wrote close to the very time that Herod the Great was in power, penned the words:

> **"The last age, decreed by Fate, is come; And a new frame of all things does begin, A holy progeny from heaven descends— "**

The fact that the poet applied this to Salonius, the new-born son of the Consul Pollio, with whom he sought to gain political favor, does not set aside the point I am making. Jesus was not rejected because He was unexpected, but because He was unconventional. Based upon the prediction of Daniel, the world was in a state of anticipation, but Jesus did not act as they expected a Messiah to act. He did not come riding in on a prancing steed, but entered Jerusalem meek and lowly, riding on an ass.

JESUS AS PEACEMAKER

I am sure all of this is more interesting to me than it is to

you, and lest I bore you to distraction with historical commentary, I will move on to consideration of the qualifications of Jesus to be the "Prince of Peace." My good friend, the able jurist, has posed a question that must be met. He suggests that Jesus cannot be the Messiah of the prophets, because that Messiah was to bring peace, whereas there has been little except war since the birth of Jesus.

I am seeking no escape from reality when I say to you that it seems to me that my Jewish friends should be the last to speak critically on this score. They do not accept Jesus as arbiter of their lives, and have never recognized His leadership in the role of peacemaker. With due respect for all involved, I suggest that, unless you are willing to work for the peace that one seeks to promote, you should not judge Him too harshly if peace does not ensue. I am quite certain that Jesus laid down principles of human behavior that would make war abhorrent, but it is not principles stated but principles practiced that brings about the desired change in states and conditions.

When Isaiah prophesied that the one who sat upon the throne of David would be designated "Prince of Peace," he was simply foretelling the nature and character of His rule. He would not extend His sway or increase His territory by bloodshed or the use of armaments. He would employ peace as a strategy and produce peace as a result. Being a prince of peace, shedding no blood but His own, would distinguish Him from all political princes in the world. The princes known to Isaiah made war, but he spoke of Him who would be called the Wonderful Counselor, and whose sole plea would be for peace.

Wars and fighting are the result of sin. If sin is conquered, the cause for war will be removed, and peace will be the result. All wars exist in human hearts before they are transferred to the battlefield with its tragic carnage. The problem with man's attaining peace is that man cannot overcome sin by his own power. He cannot lift himself up by his own bootstraps. It is my

conviction that only through trust in Jesus, the sinless one, can man get rid of the guilt and stain of his own sin.

In the final analysis, peace is personal. One can have peace within, even while the world around him is falling apart, coming unglued, and blowing away. I must tell you that a sense of my own relationship to God through trust in Jesus Christ has brought to me an inner serenity and tranquillity obtainable by no other means nor from any other source. I am never with distraught persons, Jew or non-Jew, without wishing they could experience the same love, joy, and peace that have come to me.

WHERE SHALL WE TURN?

Your reply to what I say will be the reply your fathers have made. You will contend that Judaism contains within it the philosophic basis of peace. Once Judaism is disseminated throughout the world, universal peace will ensue. But the facts are against this. Judaism has not brought peace even where it has been proclaimed. It has inspired dissent, argument, and even war. There is not a single indictment you can make against the ability of Jesus to secure peace on earth that cannot also be made against Judaism.

Man will not be changed by a code of ethics, regardless of how good that code may be. He may learn to perform with all of the social graces, and yet be "ripped off" inside. A classical example is the New York actor who recently attended a cocktail party, at which someone said, "He was his old urbane, witty, and charming self." In the wee hours of the morning, he went straight from the party to his apartment, placed a revolver against his temple, and blew out his brains.

Before we sit in judgment upon Jesus as having failed to live up to advance prophetic billing as the "Prince of Peace," perhaps we need to understand what peace is. I have no desire nor inclination to define it in such a manner as to "get Jesus off

the hook." I do not think He has muffed the peace assignment at all; but it is important to me as a person to understand what is implied in the term *shalom.* **This is so often pronounced as a greeting, and may by its common usage have become as empty and inane an expression as many other such greetings.**

You will think I am presumptuous when I refer to the original implications of a Hebrew word in the presence of Jewish teachers and professors such as some of you. I feel no reluctance to do so, because I know you are in a position to correct any misapprehension under which I labor, and above all else I want to be correct. What may appear to be brashness in your sight may actually be my willingness to make myself vulnerable, for the sole purpose of helping us all to greater heights of understanding.

Shalom **is not a shallow term. It is one of several words in the Hebrew to indicate wholeness, completeness, or perfection. It is translated "peace" 172 times in Scripture. Isaiah so uses it twenty-three times, and Jeremiah eighteen times. A study of the word as used by the prophets will show that it was a term used to describe the greatest and highest good that could come to the people of God. Let me cite an example. In the height of his strength, David subdued the maritime region of Palestine, and captured the cities held by the Philistines along what we now call the Gaza Strip. He then directed his might against what is now Arab territory, and overthrew Hadadrezer, a wealthy desert chieftain. When he had finished this conquest, the king of Hamath, another sheik who had been harassed by Hadadrezer, sent his oldest son to see David. The Bible says, "He sent Hadoram his son to king David, to inquire of his welfare, and to congratulate him" (1 Chronicles 18:10). The word rendered "welfare" is** *shalom.*

There is an interesting usage of the same word in Jeremiah 38:4. The prophet of God got himself into serious trouble with the politicians and the clergy in the national capital by telling the

truth, not an uncommon thing even in our day. The Chaldean army, which had swept everything before it, was approaching Jerusalem from the north, descending through Syria. The prophet had revealed that Jerusalem would be destroyed because of the wickedness and idolatry of the people. The leaders refused to accept this as true and conspired to keep it from the ears of the people by suppressing the news media. Their method was quite effective. Any reporter who weakened morale by suggesting the overthrow of the city would be killed under a trumped-up charge of treason.

But Jeremiah was a prophet of God. One time he became discouraged because the people laughed at him and ridiculed him as a gloomy fanatic. He resolved to keep his mouth shut and speak no more in the name of the Lord. But the word of the Lord was as a fire in his bones. He became weary from holding in. He had to speak or burst. Even the threat of death could not deter him. He knew there were four government spies trailing him everywhere he went, taking down what he said for evidence.

But he told the people that the Lord had revealed to him that those who remained in the city, under the false hope that it could not be taken, would die by the sword, by famine, or disease. Those who abandoned the city and surrendered to the Chaldeans would live. He emphatically said, "This city shall surely be given into the hand of the king of Babylon's army, which shall take it." The secret service representatives hurried away and told the king, "We petition you to kill this man at once. He is destroying the morale of our soldiers and creating unrest among the citizens by encouraging them to give up and desert the city. This man is not seeking the welfare of the people, but their hurt."

Jeremiah was proven to be right by subsequent events, but our purpose in citing this incident is to call attention to the fact that the word rendered "welfare" is *shalom.* **In Psalm 38 is an apt description of a conscience burning and troubled under the**

weight of sin. The bard of Israel says, "Neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin" (v. 3). The word "rest" is a translation of *shalom.*

During the troublesome times that ensued in Israel after Saul was slain and David ascended the throne, rivalry occurred between two factions. One was led by Joab, the other by Amasa. Joab plotted to kill Amasa, and feigned friendship with him in order to get close enough to murder him with his sword. A description of their meeting is given in 2 Samuel 20:9: "And Joab said to Amasa, Art thou in health, my brother? And Joab took Amasa by the beard with the right hand to kiss him." It is not necessary to continue with the gory details. My point is served when I tell you that the word "health" is a rendering of *shalom.*

What I am saying to you is actually very simple. You object that Jesus of Nazareth cannot be the Messiah because the Messiah was to be the "Prince of Peace." You cite the wars that have been fought since the advent of Jesus as proof that He cannot qualify. Yet the word for "peace" is not limited to cessation from hostilities on the battlefield. It is not restricted to a truce or pact hammered out by delegates from nations engaged in armed conflict. The word *shalom,* **which was used by Isaiah, has many applications, and Jesus could be the prince of peace by qualifying in any one of them.**

If Jesus outlined for mankind a way toward universal welfare, He is the prince of peace. If He provided rest from a guilty conscience, He is the prince of peace. If His way is the way of health, wholeness, and restoration of the good life, He is the prince of peace. To your fathers, *shalom* **meant much more than cessation from strife. It was a positive force within, which stemmed from a sense of a right relationship with the Eternal One.**

I think that Jesus has manifested every characteristic

required of a prince of peace. A prince is one who directs and governs a principality, and Jesus has shown himself to be an exemplar and ruler of the principality of *shalom.* He reconciled us to God. He became the lifeline by which we return to the relationship of righteousness. He spanned the chasm eroded by sin and by the consequent fear of death. He is the "bridge over troubled waters."

If God has ordained that the Messiah be the prince of peace, and if Jesus is the Messiah, the fact will not be altered by either our acceptance or rejection of it. A truth is no less a truth if it is denied by all. It is my contention that you cannot base your rejection of the Messianic claim of Jesus of Nazareth purely upon the basis of war, in a world that has rejected His leadership and direction. You may sincerely deny that Jesus is the Messiah, but you must examine honestly and openly all of the testimony, without endorsing a position on the basis that it supports either a prejudice or presupposition.

What about the numerous prophecies that the Jews who associated with Jesus claimed He fulfilled? Can we casually dismiss specific predictions as to time and place on the ground that our own interpretation of the scope and nature of His rule seems to conflict with the state of world affairs subsequent to His coming?

EDERSHEIM

Assisted by his daughter, Dr. Edersheim spent seven years writing. He did meticulous research of what might be considered points of minor significance. On the morning of Easter Sunday, 1883, he penned the final words of the two large volumes bearing the title *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah.* I would like to share his closing passage with you:

> **"Our task is ended, and we also worship and look up. And we go back from this sight into a hostile world, to**

love, and to live, and to work for the Risen Christ. But as earth's day is growing dim, and, with earth's gathering darkness, breaks over it heaven's storm, we ring out, as of old they were wont, from church-tower, to the mariners that bugged a rock-bound coast— our Easter bells to guide them who are belated, over the storm-tossed sea, beyond the breakers, into the desired haven. Ring out, earth, all thy Easter-chimes; bring your offerings all ye people; worship in faith, for—

'This Jesus, which was received up from you into heaven, shall so come, in like manner as ye beheld Him going into heaven.' 'Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly!'"

I do not argue that Jesus is the Messiah from the standpoint that a brilliant Jew and erudite student such as Dr. Edersheim accepts Him as such. I do say, however, that if one so thoroughly familiar with the teaching of the prophets as to qualify as a lecturer in the Septuagint at Oxford concludes that Jesus was the Messiah, it should make the rest of us cautious about denying it. We should be particularly cautious if the basis of our opinion is that world conditions in the political world negate His claim.

I fear that the problem is much deeper than appears on the surface. While I would not want to be found guilty of stereotyping or generalizing, candor demands that I disclose my real feeling. The modern Jewish mind has revolted against the whole concept of the supernatural, until it has rejected the idea that the oracles given to your fathers constituted the Word of God. Lip service is paid in the synagogue and temple to that for which there is no corresponding place of reverence in the heart.

The same naturalistic and humanistic philosophy, which has eaten like a cancer at the core of the Christian faith, has also attracted you. It has left you with nothing to which you may cling for hope, except mere finite rationalization. This is not new. In 1796, David Levi, a learned Jew, wrote a book entitled

Dissertations on the Prophesies of the Old Testament. **In that work he affirmed that Deism and infidelity had made such large strides in the world that they had reached even the Jewish nation. He declared that so many Jews were infected by skepticism through reading the works of Bolingbroke, Hume, and Voltaire, that they scarcely believed in revelation.**

GOD, NOT CHRIST

Article Six of the confession drawn up by Moses Maimonides reads, "I believe with a perfect faith, that all the oracles of the prophets are true." It is not enough to repeat this, if deep inside you do not concede that God exists as a personal being, nor that He has revealed His will through the prophets as His chosen servants. If you will pardon me for my bluntness, I do not think the problem with the present Jewish and non-Jewish world is a problem of Jesus Christ at all. The problem is *God.*

If you do not accept the existence of God, it would make no difference what testimony I presented from your own Scriptures to validate the claim of anyone to be the Messiah. You will not regard one as a Son if you do not believe there is a Father. It is not enough to hold that God is "the ground of being," or "the sum of human experience," or "the composite of human reasoning."

I would not widen the gap between us. My purpose is to narrow it until we can at least shake hands across it. But I feel obligated to tell you that I believe with all my heart that God is a divine being with all of the attributes of personality. I believe that He possesses an infinite mind, that He is omniscient, and that He has revealed himself to man. It is no problem for me to accept Jesus. He alone, of all the millions who have trodden the surface of the earth, is the key figure to the glorious prophecies vouchsafed the descendants of Abraham.

At the risk of being repetitious, let me make it clear again. If Jesus is proven to be the Messiah by His fulfillment of predictions divinely given, I doubt that we can honestly disclaim this on the basis of an arbitrarily imposed definition of peace. To me, He is all that the prophets declared He would be. His claims are validated in my life and experiences, as certainly as I believe them to be in the testimony of those Jews with whom He associated while on earth. If Jesus of Nazareth is not the Messiah, there will be no Messiah, for the simple reason that the conditions imposed have been fulfilled in history. It is not a question of Jesus or someone else. It is a question of Jesus or no one else.

Christianity Challenged

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I think you will agree that there is nothing static in the way these forums are conducted. No one can accuse us of a tightly programmed format, for we hardly know from one meeting to the next which way our path will lead. I think that is good. To illustrate, let me read a portion of a letter from a friend who has attended regularly, but prefers to remain anonymous. His question is this:

I have just finished reading *Those Incredible Christians,* **by Hugh J. Schonfield, and I wonder how you would answer his accusation that Jesus did not found Christianity at all, that what you advocate is a distortion of the message. He charges that Jesus never once proclaimed what you claim to be the ideal of Christianity. Is it possible that the whole Christian bit is the result of cleverly contrived propaganda introduced by Paul, as a renegade Jew, and has no real basis of fact, in either the life or the teachings of Jesus? I think you ought to face up to the possibility that what you believe may be based upon fraud and deceit.**

That is plain enough, isn't it? But I am perfectly willing to accept the invitation, or challenge, if it was intended to be such, to express myself regarding the implications made by Dr. Schonfield in his book. You must recognize, however, that this introduces a new dimension into our discussion. I can hardly examine charges made against Paul without referring to his writings. I have sought to avoid direct quotations from what I

regard as the New Covenant Scriptures, for you do not accept them as authoritative. But it is hardly fair to review accusations without allowing the accused to testify in his own behalf. I shall consider myself free, then, to freely quote Paul and allow him to speak for himself, as long as I am replying to this question.

Before I proceed with the immediate question, I think there are two other questions that require answers. The first concerns the identity of Dr. Hugh J. Schonfield. The second concerns the thesis propounded in the book to which my esteemed friend calls attention.

Who is Hugh J. Schonfield? The answer is that Dr. Schonfield is a Jew who personally affirms that He is a Nazarene, since for him Jesus is the Messiah. He is the author of many books, not all of which are religiously oriented. One of his earlier volumes bore the title *The Suez Canal.* **When** *Those Incredible Christians* **appeared in 1968, he resided in London, where he served as president of The Commonwealth of World Citizens, of which he was also the founder. That he is a writer of tremendous skill in the fields of history and biography there can be no doubt. Indeed, he is like God in that "he calls the things that be not as though they were."**

I first became acquainted with his authorship when I read a series of three volumes which he linked together as a trilogy. The first was called *Jesus— a Biography.* **The second was** *Saints Against Caesar,* **which purported to be the story of the first Christian community. The third was** *The Jew of Tarsus,* **a biography of Paul. In all of these, I learned many things of interest and value, because of the insights of a Jewish mind whetted to a keen edge by study and research. But I must confess that I labored under the constant conviction that the author was stating as fact certain deductions that were wholly unwarranted by his quotations and projections. He seemed to be drawing milk from imaginary cows, and trying to retail it as the pure and unadulterated product.**

When he translated the New Testament into what was called *The Authentic Version,* I was one of the first persons in the United States to import one of these from England, and I have read it with pleasure and profit. But when *The Passover Plot* came from the press, I recognized that Dr. Schonfield not only read between the lines, but between the lines was the only place he did read. He did not even know the lines were there. Now this new book is advertised as one that begins where *The Passover Plot* left off. *Book Week* calls it "another shocker" and says, "The incredible Dr. Schonfield has done it again." This may be correct in a way not intended. "Incredible" means "impossible to believe." The charge made by the author against the Christians in the Roman Empire thus comes home to reflect against himself in his own publicity.

A FICTITIOUS CHRIST?

Just what is the theme of this book which is described so freely by such terms as "daring" and "explosive"? I do not want to let you down too hard, but the truth is, there is really nothing new in the postulate of Dr. Schonfield. It is as old as Jewish opposition to the faith in Jesus as the Messiah and God's Son. It goes back as far as the first proclamation of the hope of Israel to the Greek world.

Boiled down, simmered away, and skimmed off, the idea advanced by Dr. Schonfield is that Paul developed a fictitious Christ, who was not at all like the one who was born in Bethlehem of Judea. He insists that the real Jesus was not concerned with posing as the Son of God in a unique way. Any record that indicates otherwise is not genuine, but altered and doctored to foster a growing myth. The author thinks that Jesus did not rise from the dead, but that the grief-stricken followers only imagined that they had seen and spoken with someone whom they later assumed to be the Master.

Dr. Schonfield has a "thing" about Saul of Tarsus. In his book, *The Jew of Tarsus,* **he advances the idea that Saul was mentally ill, and fervently convinced that he was to be the Messiah. This diagnosis at this late date is that Saul suffered from megalomania. When he learned that Jesus claimed to be the Messiah, Saul developed an insane rage against those who propagated this "falsehood," and thereupon resolved to stamp them from the earth. There was room for only one Messiah, and Saul thought he was that one. After he had the Damascus road experience, which Dr. Schonfield thinks may have been an epileptic seizure, Saul began to think of himself as the vice-Messiah, or medium through whom Jesus now communicated.**

The idea that Paul took the faith off on such a tangent and warped it to make it acceptable to the Gentiles, whom he considered to be his special charge, always seems to have a special fascination for the Orthodox Jewish mind. It was difficult for Jews, who believed that Judaism was the final revelation of God, to accept the idea of further revelation as an enlargement of and perfection of what they had. The general idea was to make the followers of Jesus merely another sect within the Jewish fold, where sectarianism was not looked upon with disfavor at all. Those who wished to recognize Jesus as the Messiah could become proselytes by being circumcised and promising allegiance to the Torah.

Those who held this view were called Nazarenes, since the name "Christian" was not bestowed until the gospel was established in the pagan environment of Syria. The destruction of Jerusalem by Titus was preceded by the flight of many of the Nazarenes to Transjordan, where they seem to have established a colony in Pella. Here the Jewish believers in the Messianic role of Jesus came to be known as the Ebionites. The word literally means "the poor men." I choose to believe it referred to their poverty caused by having to abandon their worldly goods and chattels before the onslaught of the Roman forces.

With the passing of time they began to deny the divinity of Jesus, believing Him to be merely the son of Joseph and Mary. They also came to think of Paul as an apostate, rather than an apostle. His writings seemed to conflict with the law, which they originally hoped to keep intact while being Nazarenes. I suspect that a good many of you who are present in this audience fit into that frame of reference. Obviously that produces a sharp contrast with those, like myself, who hold that justification (a sense of right relationship with God) is by faith in Jesus, and not by works of law. It was this message that became the basis of Paul's message to the whole world, to Jews and non-Jews. When Dr. Schonfield speaks of Paul's version of Christianity, he implies that Paul drummed it up and refined it to meet the challenge of the Roman Empire, to which he was constantly being subjected.

Long before Schonfield wrote, George Bernard Shaw said in his preface to *Androcles and the Lion* **(1912), "The conversion of Paul was no conversion at all: it was Paul who converted the religion that has raised one man above sin and death into a religion that delivered millions of men so completely into their dominion that their common nature became a horror to them, and the religious life became a denial of life." Shaw also said, "There is not one word of Pauline Christianity in the characteristic utterances of Jesus."**

I beg to differ with the implications of these men, and others like them, that Paul thwarted the purpose of God and invented a pseudo-Christianity which he palmed off upon an unsuspecting world as the authentic product. Dr. Schonfield candidly refers to his material contained in *The Passover Plot* **as conjecture, and I do not think he limited his speculation to that volume.**

The fact is that Paul labored constantly and tirelessly to avoid a division between Jewish and non-Jewish believers. He declared that the gospel he proclaimed was "the power of God

unto salvation," to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. He affirmed that in Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Greek, but all are one in Christ. What these modern authors brand as fanaticism I regard as fervency of spirit; what they label as heresy I regard as honesty.

There was not one message for Israel and another for the rest of humanity. Peter declared on the Day of Pentecost following the death of Jesus that God had raised Him up and made Him both Lord and Christ. Paul constantly declared the same thing, first in the synagogue and then in the marketplace. Dr. Schonfield speaks of fraud and forgery, and of falsified and concocted records, but he fails to build a case for his contention. His bias against the resurrection of Christ shapes his thinking. It is he who must make unjustifiable deductions to sustain a theory that would be laughed out of court, if it were not for its serious consequences in the hearts and lives of carnal and uninformed readers.

There were moss-covered skeptical speculations that the account of Jesus' resurrection was a part of the myth and folklore of the age, rife with the stories of "risen saviors." There never will be an adequate explanation of the testimony recorded by three Jews and one non-Jew. There are some facts that such speculations cannot explain, if the resurrection was a mere figment of the imagination or a vain delusion of superstitious minds.

Speculations and insinuations cannot explain the unadorned testimony of the simple men who knew Jesus best. They claimed that they saw Him, conversed with Him, touched Him, walked with Him, ate with Him, and spent forty days in earnest conversation with Him after He had risen from the dead. These witnesses were Jews.

Such insinuations cannot explain why these men, who were once frightened and intimidated by a political mob, would

suddenly stand forth in public without flinching, and boldly affirm the fact of the resurrection at the risk of incarceration or death. And these witnesses were Jews.

Such insinuations cannot explain why more than three thousand persons, in the very city where these events occurred, gave public assent to their faith by reforming their lives and submitting to baptism in the name of Jesus, fifty days after His alleged resurrection. And lest it be suggested that those who did this were members of an illiterate fringe group, remember that the number quickly multiplied to five thousand. These included many priests, the scholarly intellectuals of their day. And all of these were Jews!

Such an insinuation cannot explain the rapidity with which the message of Jesus swept over the known world, putting down roots in Rome, the city of the Caesars, and establishing itself in the very centers of Greek philosophy. If all of this was a hoax, we must admit that error is more powerful than truth, and a mental mirage is more appealing than reality. The circulation of the message was not the result of Greek philosophers witnessing to Jews, but of Jews witnessing to philosophers.

The insinuations made by enemies of the faith I cherish have been borrowed by Dr. Schonfield. He also is unable to explain how the men who carried the message, including Saul of Tarsus, freely laid down their lives, sealing their trust in that message with their own blood. It is true that submitting to the hangman's noose or to the headman's ax does not establish the validity of testimony, but it certainly proves beyond doubt the faith of the one who would prefer death to recantation.

For this reason I do not regard *The Passover Plot* **as having originated with Jesus, but with Hugh J. Schonfield. It was not conceived by one who wanted to be the Messiah in the first century in Jerusalem. It was conceived by one whose fertile brain hatched it out in the last half of the twentieth century in**

London. While I would not like to launch a personal attack upon such an eminent author, there is some indication that he has become infected with the virus of sensationalism. Perhaps he likes to see such words as "explosive," "boldy original," and "another shocker," on the covers of his books. I agree that *The Passover Plot* was boldly original and it originated with Dr. Schonfield. There is not one iota of evidence to indicate that Jesus ever dreamed of such a crazy plot and conspiracy.

I shall now exercise the liberty Dr. Schonfield claims for himself. Twenty centuries after Paul sealed his faith by his blood, Dr. Schonfield can now sit in judgment and refer to the feverish brain of an apostle which produced a christological scheme. I have read all that was written by Paul which is available to me, and I have read all that was written by Dr. Schonfield that is available to me. Let me freely say that if Paul produced a christological scheme such as the feverish brain of Dr. Schonfield drummed up in *The Passover Plot,* you would have a good reason to attack the New Covenant Scriptures, and I would lead the attacking forces.

FAITH UNDER FIRE

I take a great deal of satisfaction from the consideration that the faith that I hold has been around for nineteen centuries. It has been subjected periodically to minute research and massive attacks. Brilliant minds have assailed it, ridiculed it, and held it up as an object of scorn. But the detractors have faded into oblivion. The grave has swallowed their physical forms, and the dust has collected upon their manuscripts. But the faith still stands, a comfort to believers, and a source of perplexity to the unbelievers. I am convinced that whatever men may say or do after two thousand years will not destroy the witness of that faith. If I must choose between *The Incredible Christians* of Dr. Schonfield and the unconquerable disciples of the apostle Paul, the choice for me is an easy one. I have already made it.

The day will come, and it is not too far distant, when the book by Dr. Schonfield will not be remembered or recognized. One day you will search for it in vain in the bookstores of our land. It will go out of print and disappear with its author, leaving no permanent mark upon the earth. The "shocker" of today will shock no one tomorrow. But the writings of the one-time Jewish rabbinical student who met Jesus on the Damascus road will live on. His poignant statement made after this momentous event, "He which persecuted us . . . now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed" (Galatians 1:23) will give courage to the hearts of millions yet to come, if Jesus does not return first.

I am going to suggest something now, which I fervently pray you will not misinterpret. Perhaps I should put it in the form of an entreaty rather than a suggestion. I invite and urge you, and even challenge you, to read the personal account of Saul of Tarsus, as he describes his encounter with Jesus of Nazareth. Be your own judges. Determine if this reads like the ravings of a diseased brain or a warped mind. Shall we brand as a hopeless fanatic every individual who alters his whole life as a result of the influence of one whose life was without flaw, and whose moral values are hailed as superb by His very detractors?

I know men who repeat the charges made against Saul who have never read one word written by this disciple of Jesus. They are thoroughly familiar with the writings of George Bernard Shaw and H. G. Wells, who were implacable foes of the apostle. They can recite by rote the statement of the former: "There has really never been a more monstrous imposition perpetrated than the imposition of the limitations of Paul's soul upon the soul of Jesus." They have never pored over one letter of the apostle and pinpointed the "monstrous imposition." Did it ever occur to you that what Paul wrote was like an icy finger pointing at the guilty hearts of these modern philosophers, whose immoral conduct is now so well known?

Shaw wrote, "No sooner had Jesus knocked over the dragon of superstition than Paul boldly set it on its legs again in the name of Jesus." The prejudiced mind will grasp at such pronouncements, but the unprejudiced mind will investigate. Surely the Jews through the centuries have been the victims of such prejudice and persecution as to make the very terms obnoxious. Shall we then perpetuate such a bias in our own hearts toward a Jew who wrote, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain"? Would it not be fair to read what was written by this graduate of the original Hillel School, and allow him to testify in his own behalf?

Do not base your judgment upon the testimony of either George Bernard Shaw or myself! Examine the evidence for yourself. Ignore the frowns of friends and the criticism of contemporaries. It is one thing to know what Hugh Schonfield said about Paul. It is a wholly different thing to know what Paul said about Jesus!

Potpourri of Questions

Contents

I confess that I do not know how to categorize or designate such a meeting as this one today. Perhaps we should label it "a spiritual smorgasbord." No program has been formulated, and no set address was prepared. Instead, you are free to ask whatever is in your heart, and you yourselves will determine the path we shall take and the direction that we travel in our mutual discussion. Do not feel reluctant to ask anything that may seem trivial or out of place. Whatever is important to you certainly will not be foolish to me.

Will you repeat what you said some time ago about your indifference to Jews becoming "Christians" and elaborate upon it for my benefit?

Yes, indeed. What I said then and what I maintain now is that I am not all "hung up" on what Jews call themselves when they reach the personal conclusion that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah of whom the prophets spoke. The earliest disciples of Jesus were all Jews or proselytes. They were not designated as Christians. They were called Nazarenes, believers, disciples, or brethren. None of these was a title. In the aggregate, they were known as people of "the Way." Perhaps all of us should abandon our sectarian labels and become once more followers of the Way. Hundreds of primitive disciples of Jesus actually died for their faith and never knew they were expected to be designated Christians. It is a fact that only after the message was taken beyond the borders of Palestine into a pagan environment that

the term "Christians" was applied to the believers. Luke informs us that the disciples, or believers, were first called Christians at Antioch.

In spite of the ingenious rationalization of some of my friends who like to think the name was bestowed by the Lord, I doubt that it was predicted by the prophets or pronounced by divine revelation. I suspect it was contrived by the populace of Antioch. It may have been even given in jest, as a nickname. Certainly history bears out that the inhabitants of the area were addicted to such characterizations. The ending of the word with *ianoi* merely means "to be affiliated with," or "to be a member of the party of someone." The believers in the messiahship of Jesus were regarded as members of the party of the Messiah, to distinguish them from those who did not believe in Him.

The designations "Messianic Jews" or "Jews for Jesus" is sufficient for me. If there are connotations of the word "Christian" that violate your conscience, making it either abhorrent or inexpedient for you, do not become uptight about it. I want you simply to share in the reconciling power of God's grace that was made available to us through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus. What you call yourselves is a matter of indifference to me, as long as you truly glorify God. I do not want you to become non-Jews, nor to become like me, except in my trust in the Nazarene as the Messiah as foretold by the prophets. You are Jews, and while no human parentage or ancestry will justify us before God, you must be what you are and not something else!

You do contemplate that those Jews who accept Jesus as the Messiah should become members of some Christian church, do you not?

No Sir, I do not! The whole concept expressed by the term, "some Christian church," is contrary to my thinking. It runs counter to all I believe about the eternal purpose of God. In the

first place, I doubt that the word "church" should be in our spiritual vocabulary. It is not at all a translation of the word it purports to represent. That word in the Greek is *ekklesia,* which comes from the term *ek,* meaning "out," and *kaleo,* "to call." So *ekklesia* simply refers to those who have been "called out" and called together by response to the good news of God's great move in history to form a people for himself. The word corresponds to the Hebrew *kahal,* an "assembly," or "assemblage."

I do not want to become technical or theological. God called Abraham out of the idolatrous world, of which he was a part, in order to create for himself a nation, a special people to keep alive on earth the belief in one God. Even so, "in the fulness of time" He called out a people composed of Jews and non-Jews to witness to mankind that the Messiah has come. It is enough that you hear the call and heed it as did Abraham, and thus become one of the "called out." If you have to be identified, why not be simply a synagogue of the Messianists? Above all else, do not feel that it is essential to identify with "some church," and thus unwittingly lend your influence to further the sectarian spirit which is so carnal and immature. God has only one called-out people. There is but one body, and never can be another. Just be content to remain where God receives you, and do not feel obligated to become something that men try to make you become.

Let me tell you sincerely that when you respond to the gospel by faith in the greatest fact ever proclaimed (that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God), and when you are baptized in validation of your faith in that fact, you are my brother, regardless of what you call yourself. I am concerned only that all of us be the people of God. It is this for which we are called. There is only one family because there is only one Father. Anyone who is born from above surely is in that family. Let us just be sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. Let us be brothers and sisters in the majestic family of God. Let those of

us who have become friends of Jesus be friends of one another, and not become enemies over what designations we paint on our humanly-erected signboards. I pray that all of us will become "people of the Way." It is on that basis I receive you, for it is thus that God received us all. The call of the ages is echoing through the corridors of time. Hear it, heed it, and let us walk together unto His marvelous glory.

If you entertain such feelings as you say you do, how do you account for the terrible persecutions to which Jews have been subjected by Christians?

I do not want to be evasive, nor do I want to condone actions that are cruel, regardless of who perpetrates them. But I think you labor under a misapprehension. It occurs to me that many Jews in the western world assume that everyone who is not a Jew is a Christian. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Perhaps you think of the occidental world as a Christian realm. It is not. America is not a Christian nation. It is pagan in its culture and, regardless of its claim to be Christian, it has false gods and false "isms" to which it defers and pays homage. You are not a separate people living in a Christian world. Both of us are living in a pagan world.

Spain, under Ferdinand and Isabella, was not a Christian nation. Thomas of Torquemada was not a Christian, although he was the prior of a Dominican monastery. The pope who inaugurated the Inquisition at his behest, and made him grand inquisitor for Castile and Aragon, was not a Christian. It was not a Christian people who tortured the Jews and finally banished them in 1492, so that a modern historian wrote the sad words, "The galleons of Columbus setting out for the New World passed the ships taking the Jews into a new dispersion."

Germany, under the one-time paperhanger who took the name of Hitler, was not Christian. The frightful holocaust was not the work of Christians, but of sin-blighted pagans. You may

believe me or not, but no true follower of Jesus ever persecuted Jews or anyone else. Indeed, Jesus taught His disciples to love their enemies, to do good to those who would despitefully use them and persecute them. Regardless of one's profession, if he engages in persecution, he is not a follower of Jesus. It is shameful that men have cloaked themselves under the garb inscribed with the name Christian to cover up their dastardly crimes. You cannot identify the criminal by the disguise he has stolen from the innocent.

The follower of Jesus suffers himself to be defrauded, rather than to defraud. He endures illegal confiscation of his goods, rather than to confiscate the possessions of another. The disciple of the Nazarene would rather meet death than to take life. In Christ, racial and ethnic differences lose their significance. To the extent that racial prejudice exists in a man's heart, he is not truly a follower of Him who died for us all. The purpose of the Spirit of God is to pour out in our hearts the love of God, until we see all men as our Creator sees them.

Is not the main difference between Christianity and modern Judaism the fact that Christianity is a "pie in the sky" religion? Modern Judaism encourages one to do all the good he can on earth because death brings only the peace of non-being. I am talking about the philosophic distinction, not about the theological spread between them.

That is a big question. I have no doubt it is an important one. My answer will probably not satisfy you, but surely you can be cheered in knowing that a few years ago it would not have satisfied me either. I must confess that I am not too interested in any philosophic clash between Christianity and Judaism of the modern stripe. I regard both of them as corruptions of God's revelation. Christianity is a term coined to designate a complex system. It is composed of accretions of human explanations, traditions, interpretations, and socially acceptable ethics and has snowballed through the ages. Just as barnacles are not a part of

a vessel, so these are not a part of what God intended. Modern Christianity is no more the simple faith proclaimed by the envoys of Jesus than the socialistic state of modern England is the monarchy of the past. I confess I am not too "high" on the conglomerate mess lumped off under the general label of Christianity.

By the same token, I am equally turned off by what is dubbed "modern Judaism." Maybe it is because I flinch when I see the suffix *ism* attached to any term of religious significance. It is the tail that wags religious dogs, and who wants to go to the dogs? Judaism, whether it be the brand in vogue yesterday or the current article, is not the system revealed to your fathers at Sinai and delivered to Moses by the hand of angels. It is a synthetic distillate composed of one part revelation and nine parts rationalization, there being nine times more human than divine in it. Its empty rituals can no more satisfy the longings of the human soul than can the hollow liturgies of organized Christianity. It is time to ask both sects in the words of Isaiah, "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfieth not?" (55:2).

I represent no sect, party, splinter, or philosophic clique in modern "Christianity." I am not interested in having you embrace it. My only creed is Jesus the Nazarene. I accept His life and seek to reproduce it in my own feeble and imperfect existence. The life of Jesus has promise, in this world and in the world to come. I do not wait for "pie in the sky," although the "pie" I share now is big enough that I cannot exhaust it in these few years of mundane existence. I receive a hundredfold more in this life for what I sacrifice for His sake, but in the world to come I shall have life eternal in its fullness. It is a travesty on justice to make it appear that the faith in the Messiah causes one to stumble blindly along through life, with no reward here and only a nebulous hope of blessing beyond the grave.

You were very perceptive in your use of the term "modern

Judaism," for what you have is not what your fathers trusted in at all. You have heard the song of the same sirens that echoed in the ears of the proponents of institutionalized Christianity. You have been lured to shipwreck on the same rocks.

In the eleventh century, Moses Maimonides drew up a summary of the Jewish creed in thirteen articles, and these were accepted as a universal confession of faith among Jews.

Article Twelve states, "I believe, with a perfect faith, in the advent of the Messiah, and though he should tarry, yet I will patiently await every day till he come." Article Thirteen states, "I believe, with a perfect faith, that there will be a revivification of the dead, at the period when it shall please the Creator, blessed be his name, and let his remembrance be exalted forever and ever!"

What has happened to modern Jews to make them disregard, and even deny, these statements from the celebrated rabbi who was hailed as "the eagle of the doctors" and "the lamp of Israel"? Certainly there are many in this generation who do not patiently wait for the Messiah every day. They have rejected the idea of a personal Messiah, and have substituted as an expedient a system they hope will somehow leaven the social structure of which they are a part.

What has happened to the "perfect faith" that the sleeping dead will arise? Many modern Jews, betrayed by the "evolutionary process" into believing that man is merely a superior animal, reject the idea of a life beyond the tomb. To them man dies like a beast, and his end is extinction.

Modern Judaism, like modern Christianity, so-called, is the result of men coming under the influence of clever sophists, whose skeptical writings cut the heart out of faith in a divine being and in the supernatural. David Levi was a learned Jew who published a memorable work called *Dissertations on the*

Prophecies of the Old Testament, **twenty years after the American Revolution broke out. In his book he declares that Deism and infidelity had made such great strides in the world that they reached even to the Jewish nation. The result was that many became so infected with skepticism by reading Bolingbroke, Hume, Voltaire, and others that they "scarcely believe in a revelation, much less have they any hope in their future restoration."**

We must face the fact that the Jewish and Christian faiths have come under attack from infidelity for the same reason. They have a common origin. Both were revealed to men by divine power. I would like to make it clear that I accept the veracity of the message given at Sinai with the same degree of fervor that I believe in the message of the chosen envoys of Jesus. Both conveyed hope. The first held forth the hope of a Messiah who would put all things together, the second conveyed hope of man's eternal sharing with the divine when death was conquered and destroyed.

Is it not true that Jesus borrowed from philosophers and priests before His day, and there was nothing really distinctive or new in the system He devised and which you defend?

You remind me of the old anecdote of the man who imbibed a little too much liquor, and in his semidrunken state began to brag and bluster about his physical prowess. He announced that he could whip anyone in town. There was no response, so he broadened the scope of his challenge to include anyone in the county. Again there were no takers. "I can whip anyone in this whole state," he said. Upon hearing this, a little man stepped out of the crowd and knocked him down. The inebriated individual clambered slowly to his feet and said, "You will have to excuse me, please. I took in too much territory that last time."

That is what you have done in your question. The

implication is that everything Jesus taught was appropriated from prior human sources, and there was nothing distinctive about the system He inaugurated. That takes in too much territory upon both counts. It would make of Jesus a peddler of secondhand precepts and used concepts. It would have been ridiculous for one who was the animate embodiment of all truth to deny any truth man had discovered. Truth is truth, regardless of who asserts it, and all truth is consistent with itself. Jesus was concerned about truth for its own sake, and not as a means for personal renown. Man had lived for thousands of years and had received revelations from God through the prophets. Philosophers and wise men had discovered principles of moral and ethical conduct that were becoming to mankind.

In the endorsement and restatement of such principles, Jesus did not endorse either the philosophers or their systems. If He had refused to state a truth because of its prior discovery, He would have come under censure as being either ignorant or inconsistent. Jesus did not profess there were no truths before He came. To the contrary, He frequently said, "It has been written." He asked the question, "Have you not read?" Certainly He brought to light truths never before ascertained, but He did not thereby renounce any truth previously asserted.

At the risk of seeming simplistic, let me say that I believe Jesus revealed for us the truth of the real nature of God. He also helped us to understand the gravity of sin as God regards it, and the alienation that results from it. Best of all, He made clear to us the means of reconciliation with God, giving us a new kind of hope never before experienced. So, while it is a fact that Jesus acknowledged all truth previously known as valid, it is just as certain He brought truths to light never before understood.

Why are you so interested in converting the Jews? Is there a peculiar kind of satisfaction in seeing a Jew give up his Jewishness?

Perhaps I do not understand the import of your question, but I shall answer what I think you meant. If I miss the point you can bring me into line on it. I suspect there are people who think there is an "open season" on Jews, stalking them in the hope of capturing them and bringing them into some "Christian" camp, and making statistics out of them. I have no inclination to go "scalp-hunting" for any specific group on earth. I love Jews and non-Jews alike. Because I believe that true joy is found in the Messiah, I want all whom I love to share in that joy. But I am like the Lord, in that I make no difference between Jew or Greek.

I have a deep conviction, based upon what I regard as the revelation of God, that life is to be found in God's Son. "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John 5:12). If a researchist in a laboratory discovered the secret of longevity, or the fountain of youth, and guarded the secret, he would be considered a selfish criminal. I have found the secret of the new creation, of life in the fourth dimension. I want you to participate in it, to know the grace and peace that come through the Messiah, but I also want everyone else to know the new life in God's Messiah as well.

I must protest your misconception that I want Jews to dispense with their Jewish identity. That is the last thing I want. I maintain that God raised up the nation of Israel as a special vessel so that the Messiah could be brought to the world. No other nation could have done so. Salvation is of the Jews. The oracles given through Moses, the writings of the prophets, the songs of your eminent poets, all of these were bestowed as gifts of God to prepare mankind for the crowning act of blessing humanity through the Jews— the advent of the Messiah. Israel was the cradle of God in which the Messianic dream was rocked. As long as I regard Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah foretold by your ancient seers, I want you to remain Jews. Your very Jewishness is a testimony to the world of the marvelous program and providence of God.

Not for anything the world has to offer would I deliberately arouse antipathy in your hearts. I will do all that is right to allay the improper attitudes of all of us toward each other. I eagerly hope that you will not become incensed when I tell you that, as I view it, you can actually be better Jews *in* Jesus than you can be *out* of Him. This is true, regardless of how you may be looked upon by the modern Jewish community. It is no adverse reflection upon you to take the step of faith in the messiahship of Jesus. Thousands of Jews did this very thing immediately after His ascension to the Father. They did not feel that in so doing they were surrendering their standing as Jews, for they recognized Jesus as a Jew, as far as His earthly relationships were concerned.

Many decades ago the learned Jew, Alfred Edersheim, in his book *The Temple* wrote, "At the close of these studies, I would say, with humble and heartfelt thankfulness, that step by step my Christian faith has only been strengthened by them; that, as I proceeded, the conviction has always been deepened that Christ is indeed the end of the Law for righteousness, to whom all the ordinances of the Old Testament had pointed, and in whom alone, alike the people and the history of Israel find their meaning."

How I wish that I might persuade all of you of the truth of this profound discovery. You do not maintain your real Jewishness by rejecting the Messiah, but by accepting Him. All of the illustrious history that your fathers lived converges upon Him. It is a tragedy to search all of your generations for the pearl of greatest price, and then die in reach of it without ever touching it.

But this must suffice for this meeting. A week from now, if God wills, we shall draw our dialogue to a close.

The Problem of Sin

Contents

Today we begin our last session of sharing for the present time. I commend you for your interest and faithfulness, and I assure you of my deep appreciation for your spirit of frankness and concern. I look forward to our future meetings, but right now we must get on with this one. I do not want to be in the position of the arm-waving orator who said, "Ladies and gentlemen, I speak for posterity!" A man on the back row of seats stood up and said, "If you don't quit pretty soon, posterity will be here before you finish!" Who has the first question?

What do you think about sin? Is it a reality, or is it a concept dreamed up by religious leaders to make men have a sense of guilt so they can be exploited?

You have certainly asked about a matter with which all of us are familiar. Regardless of how far removed some of us have been from certain areas of discussion, when we talk about sin we are getting very close to home, for every one of us. I wish I could tell you that sin has been proven to be a figment of the imagination, a goblin of the past, a ghost invented by primitive man. But sin is real. Its causes are real. Its effects are real. The suffering that results is real. The ultimate price we must pay for it is real.

In its original, "sin" is from a word meaning "to miss the mark." This is an obvious allusion to the practice of archery, in which men use a bow to discharge arrows toward a mark on a

target. There are various ways in which one can miss a mark. He can shoot over it, and there is a word to describe this kind of moral dereliction. It is called "transgressions," which means "to go beyond." One can fall short of the mark. The word "disobedience" is used to designate such a failure. One can have a good aim, but his arrow is deflected by a gust of wind or by a hanging limb. The word "err" is used to describe this. It means "to swerve from the path." Then there is the word "iniquity," which seems to be used to cover the whole area of sinful existence.

In furtherance of our analogy, we can say that it is the field in which we practice the art of moral archery. The original Hebrew word points up the lack of rectitude or integrity, and this the whole ground for man's departure from the righteousness God demands. It is rendered in such terms as "unjust," "unrighteous," "ungodly," and "perverse." Twelve times it is translated "wicked" or "wickedness."

There was no wondering about the reality of sin among the prophets who were raised up and sent to your fathers. In the series of woes pronounced upon the house of Israel and the men of Judah, Isaiah said, "Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart rope" (5:18). The skeptics hauled sin after them, even while challenging God to do anything about it, as the succeeding verse shows.

In Isaiah 30:1, the prophet wrote, "Woe to the rebellious children, saith the Lord, that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my Spirit, that they may add sin to sin." This puts the finger squarely on the problem. Sin is the result of rebellion, the disposition not only to disregard but to revolt against the divine will, and to look to other sources for guidance. The prophet says, "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you" (59:2).

It is affirmed by Solomon that "fools make a mock at sin." I take this to mean they laugh at it, scoff at it, and make fun of it. One is in a grave condition when he jokes about his sin, like a sick comic. He is like a man with cancer of the lungs who keeps on smoking cigarettes, sucking tar into his diseased organs while ridiculing those who try to point out the folly of his persistence. Sin is as real as God's condemnation of it. It is as real as His power to forgive it!

In his book, *Old Testament Synonyms,* **Dr. Girdlestone wrote:**

> **"The Hebrew Bible meets us with a full acknowledgment of these manifold aspects of human suffering, and blends wrongdoing and suffering to a remarkable degree, setting forth sin in its relation to God, to society, and to man's own self, depicting it in its negative aspect as iniquity and unrighteousness, and in its positive aspect as rebellion and a breach of trust."**

The author of sin never achieved a more powerful conquest through sin than he did when he beguiled men into thinking there is no sin.

What makes a thing sin? Why should one human action be labeled a sin while another human action is regarded as harmless?

Sin always is related to authority, and in the human being it stems from the fact that man has been made in the image of God. He is invested with the responsibility of glorifying God by his life. Man does not belong to himself. He has been made by another, and is subject to the will of his Creator. It is inherent in the human consciousness, I think, to recognize that one is a product of the creative genius of another, and so to strive to reproduce the nature of the Creator who made him. Anything that reflects against the nature and character of the Creator, or is in defiance to the will of the Creator, is missing the mark. It is

sin!

If it is conceded that there was a time when man did not exist but was made through the exercise of the will of another, it would appear that the will of the Creator should be the will of the creature. The Creator should determine the purpose of the one whom He brought into existence as a rational being. This makes the mark at which we aim not our own. It has been planted by divine authority and will be the criterion by which we are measured. It is not our mark that we miss, but God's mark for us. A thing is a sin because it is done in violation or in defiance to the authority of God, and that authority as relates to human conduct is found in the sacred Scriptures.

If those Scriptures do not contain a revelation of God, there is no such revelation, for nothing else can qualify as a revelation. If there is no revelation, man is doomed to wander through an alien world, without ever understanding his relationship to it. It then follows that the Creator who made him has abandoned him upon a storm-tossed sea, without rudder or compass. That may be the position of some who are here today, but it is not my position. I am fully committed to the divine will for my feeble existence on this planet. To the extent I can grasp it, I shall eagerly follow it. My sin will be of the head and not the heart!

Why did God make man so he would sin? If He knew everything from the beginning, could He not have created a being who would not sin? Is not the God you preach responsible for all the suffering in the world?

We find ourselves in deep water when we begin to probe why God did certain things in certain ways, and why He did not do them otherwise. I am reluctant to pit my finite mind against His infinite one, or to appear judgmental of His means or methods. I confess that I dread this question more than any other. This is not to say there is any resentment against the

question, for it is the very type of thing about which any rational person will be curious. I do not shy from it because of any personal lack of confidence in the eternal purpose of God. I am only reluctant to deal with the matter, lest I exhibit some measure of irreverence by treading upon holy ground, where I should be removing my shoes.

The prophet Isaiah wrote, "Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! . . . Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands? Woe unto him that saith unto his father, What begettest thou? or to the woman, What has thou brought forth?" (45:9, 10). Let me say, then, I do not question the power or ability of God to form a creature of any kind. He is the potter, and He could spin the clay on the wheel and produce any kind of vessel He wanted to design and take shape under His hands.

Our inability to explain definitely why God exercised His sovereign power as He did need not deter us from using the rational ability He bestowed upon us to consider some of the probabilities involved. God wanted a being who could worship Him by personal choice and not by compulsion. There is no glory to be derived from one who expresses respect because he is helpless and cannot do otherwise. There is a difference between the genuflection of one who bows from personal adoration, and the kneeling of a puppet whose actions are controlled by strings pulled from behind a curtain. Choice is an act of the will, and one who has the power of will may choose the wrong course. If one is not free to make a mistake he is not free at all. One who cannot choose to do wrong cannot choose to do right!

God could have created a fleshly automation, a kind of computerized zombie. But such a creation would not have been a man. It would have been a machine. Any response by such a creature would have been a compulsive reaction and not a manifestation of love or personal concern. God made man a personality. He presented him with options and alternatives. He

informed him in advance of the consequences of his actions. He set before him light and darkness, bitter and sweet, life and death.

God did not create sin. Sin is the result of man's own choice. He chose not to listen to God but to self. He chose to supplant God's will with his own will. The suffering that results from sin was not caused by God. It is a part of the package deal that Satan offered. Man bought it, lock, stock, and barrel. One can choose to be and to do what he pleases, but he cannot choose the consequences. Death is the built-in ultimate consequence of sin. The very fact that man is conscious of his failure and is aware of his sin is proof that he is not a mere animal. Neither a one-celled being in primordial ooze nor the most advanced primate in a zoo ever questions why he was so made. Only one creature bears the image of his Creator and can probe the purpose of his creation. Sin never was affirmed of animals. The very fact of sin in the universe proves that man is more than an animal.

Those of you who are philosophically inclined will not be satisfied with what I have said. Two of you are esteemed teachers of philosophy and are humanists. You will not be happy with my statements. The problem of the entrance of sin into an order of things which had been pronounced "very good" by the God who created it, is an age-old one. Hundreds of books have been written about it in the past, and new ones come pouring from the press every year. None of them are wholly satisfactory, for if one appeared with all of the answers there would be no further questions and no other books.

I am not inclined to speculate. There is nothing wrong with the word "speculate" in its origin, for it means "to spy out" or "observe." In our day, however, it generally means to theorize from conjectures without sufficient evidence. My speculation may prove to be no more valid than that of others. What I prefer to do is to accept apparent facts and to allow Scripture to be my

guide in what has gone before. From my own tragic experiences, as well as from divine revelation, I am convinced that sin is all too real. You may call it by some other name, but that will not change its nature. It was Shakespeare who said, "A rose by any other name will smell as sweet." That may be paraphrased to read, "A skunk by any other name will smell as rank." Perhaps that is more appropriate with relation to sin.

I am a moral agent as a result of my humanity and rationality. I do not use the term "free moral agent," for one who is not free is not a moral agent. I am responsible as a being, a person. I am answerable for my thoughts and the actions that they beget. I do not charge God for my own dereliction. I do not cry out to Him, "Why have You made me like this?" I am grateful for His love in providing a consciousness of forgiveness in His Son. In fact, I am grateful for consciousness. I accept myself as I am, for it is the way He accepted me. He straightened out the identity problem for me.

Why is it that Christians differ about what constitutes sin? Could you not make a list of sins and distribute it so that all of us could check our conduct by it? The more I hear Christians talk about sin, the more confused I become.

I am fully aware that many professed disciples of the Messiah tend to confuse the minds of men by their endless debates and disputes about what are called specific sins. I am not sure that Christians really differ about sin. They acknowledge that it is rebellion against God and His authority. They realize that sin involves dethronement of God in the heart, and enthronement of self as a usurper of the scepter. You probably would not get a great deal of debate about the nature of sin in the abstract.

It is in the application of the term to various aspects of behavior that wide divergencies occur. Sometimes these differences occur because of traditional taboos. Sometimes they

result from differences in social pressures. A few days ago some of us were talking informally about the use of alcoholics as table beverages. I remarked at the time that anyone who could not get along with alcohol should get along without it. He has lost control and transferred it to a bottle opener. I am a teetotaler by choice. This is not because I think beverage wine at your dinners is a sin. No Christian can show that it is, and informed ones would not attempt it. Drunkenness is repeatedly condemned in the Scriptures, however. It is a sin. It is a work of the flesh. But drunkenness results from lack of moderation, from imbibing to excess.

Christians who regard the moderate use of wine as a sin are reading their own attitudes, feelings, and opinions back into God's revelation. The same thing holds true with many other items branded as a sin. God has not given us a meticulous list of do's and don'ts. Under Christ, God has not laid down a catalog of precise rules to be obeyed, but has enunciated pure and elevated moral principles to govern our conduct.

It is unfortunate that most men prefer exact rules and specification. They want to be told precisely what is expected of them, what they may do and what they must avoid. This removes from them the need for making decisions based upon a careful consideration of alternatives. It also precludes them from being responsible for their behavior. Jesus did not specify a great number of prohibitions, since He was instituting an era of grace, as distinguished from one of law.

Under the law of Moses, your fathers were told what to do when they came across a stray ox or sheep, the kind of clothing to wear, how to construct a roof on a house and what to do when they found a bird's nest with eggs or fledglings in it. In Christ, we do not have a "computer printout" of sins. God has not filed a "bill of particulars" for us. In fact, attitudes and intentions can be as condemning as the actions themselves.

I would not be so presumptuous as to compile a list of sins for distribution. Some behavior is always sinful, some is never sinful. Some may or may not be, depending upon the circumstances, the conscience, and/or the motivation of the one performing the act. Another consideration is the long-range effect of the act. I am personally responsible for ascertaining the will of God to the extent of my ability, and for carrying it out to the extent of my capability. You have the same obligation. It is enough for me to know that divine forgiveness is available through penitence and prayer. It is not available because of my own merit but because of the Messiah. I do not want to usurp the place of God by imposing upon mankind my own judgment as to the classification of sins.

How can you justify your idea of God allowing Jesus, who was innocent, to die for something others had done? Is not this the greatest act of injustice in history, and would it not make God a murderer if it were true?

I have a great deal of hesitancy about entering into a discussion in which it may appear that I am critically examining either the motives or actions of God. I plead again my human limitations. I never can fully grasp the infinite purpose, the pleasure, and will of God. Neither can I even adequately communicate to others the depth of the feelings welling up within my own soul. I can be grateful for thoughts too profound to express them in mere words.

I suspect that your question ignores the gravity of sin in the universe as God regards it, and the nature of absolute mercy and justice when combined in the character of one personality. Sin distorts the whole creation of God. It erodes the relationship between man and his Maker, and erects walls between man and his fellows. It is delusive, divisive, and degrading. As long as it exists, the creative purpose of God will remain thwarted.

I think that in a world as distorted by sin as ours, the

innocent always will suffer along with the guilty. Who does not know of a father or mother who has gone to an untimely grave, weeping over a wayward child? Many a pure wife has endured the disgrace and suffered the shame inherent in the love for an errant spouse. Is it not true that in times of war, the unassuming and inoffensive have been called upon to die for greedy and selfish persons whom they have never seen? A world of sin is a disordered world. It is a topsy-turvey world in which values are overturned and reason is disordered. What God must do in an order corrupted by man, to restore it to the divine intent, is different from what He would have done if man had not known sin.

We are not capable of absolute justice or absolute mercy. We are never sure that we have all the facts in a case, and we are never certain that our mental weighing of them is equitable. The jurists in this audience are always aware of the shortcomings of law when applied to specific cases. In a world of sin and misdemeanor, our judgments are sometimes partial and relative. This carries with it the idea that we shall play down some sins, judged purely by their effect upon the society that we are elected to protect.

Only God is just, and justice demands that for every sin there must be a penalty. The ultimate penalty is death. Since we all have sinned, we all are doomed. Yet God is merciful, and mercy requires not that sin be overlooked, but that the sinner be dealt with in compassion and forgiveness. Mankind was in a predicament. Either every person must die for his own sins, or one who was guiltless could die for the sin of the whole race. Only the Son of God could qualify. As the lamb of God, He could make atonement.

He took upon himself the sins of mankind. According to Isaiah, God laid on His own Son the iniquity of us all. With His death, the demand of justice was satisfied and divine righteousness upheld. Mercy could be accorded to man without

restriction. I do not think God was a murderer, but I regard Him as my benefactor. He acted out of love for the stricken world, and I praise His name for such loving-kindness. He set me free from the law of sin and death.

You are Jews and I am a non-Jew, but there is one place where we meet, and that is in the need for someone to ransom us from our sins. In this respect there is no difference. It is because of this fact that I accept as the Messiah the one whom you gave to the world as the seed of David, the seed of Abraham. I trust that the day will come when there will be no difference in our state, but that all of us may accept Him and praise the name of the one God through Him. This is my fervent and eager prayer!

The Great Antidote

Contents

I am both profoundly honored and humbled by your gracious invitation to deliver this series of talks on the letter to the Hebrews. You have advertised them to the community as lectures, but I shall refer to them as talks. I doubt that I could qualify as a lecturer. The term seems to conjure up a mental image of an erudite professor speaking to a class of young intellectuals. While I am sure you are intellectuals, it is obvious from where I stand that you are not all young. In any event, I prefer to visit with you informally and share with you quite simply some of my views about a letter in the New Covenant Scriptures which is one of my favorites.

Your arrangement for this kind of session proves that you are abreast of the times and sailing with the tide. A great change for the better has taken place in the past several years, and there is a resurgence of interest in the study of the book that we call "The Bible." There are regular gatherings for this purpose in many dormitories in universities where, only a few years ago, this Book was held up to ridicule and scorn. I know groups of businessmen who meet at the noon hour for Bible study. Thousands of women in our land gather in groups for what are called "Bible coffees" every week. We do not meet for such studies merely because it is the "in thing" for our day, but I am thrilled to live in a day when this kind of thing is in.

Before I start talking about a specific letter, I want to speak briefly about how all of the letters came to be written.

When I was quite young, I thought the Bible was let down from Heaven in a basket. It seemed to me that God had handed it to us bound in black leather, stamped in gold, and wrapped and tied with white tissue and blue ribbon. It was a bit of a shock when I came to realize the truth about it.

The New Covenant Scriptures are not really made up of twenty-seven "books." What we call "books" are actually letters. Some of these were written to communities of believers in Christ, such as the one in Corinth, or the one composed of mustered-out soldiers of the Roman army in Thessalonica. One was addressed to a group of such communities situated in a province called Galatia, an area infiltrated and inhabited by wild, reckless, and overemotional Gauls, who had swarmed down from the north.

Some were written to individuals. Among these were the two written to Timothy while Paul was incarcerated in the Mamertine Prison in Rome. One was addressed to Philemon, who resided at Colosse, and another to Titus, who had been left on the Isle of Crete, to correct some deficiencies and establish order among the communities of saints located there. Each of these letters grew out of life conditions in which the recipients were involved. They were written to show how followers of Jesus should behave themselves, if they followed the example of Jesus in the midst of a pagan culture. The letters were guidelines to help believers solve their problems while caught up in the human predicament.

Once I thought of them as constituting a written code of laws, a compilation of statutes, judgments, and decrees, such as was handed down to Israel at Mount Sinai. I no longer believe that. Paul, who wrote more of the letters than any other person said, "We are not under law, but under grace." These are personal letters. There is a difference between a legalistic code and a personal letter written out of a heart filled with concern, love, and joy. That is why Paul could drop in a little home

remedy prescription for Timothy's upset stomach, and why he could ask him to stop by and pick up his topcoat. Paul had left it hanging in the closet at the home of Carpus, with whom he had lodging in Troas.

What I am saying upsets a lot of people. Perhaps they think it cheapens the Bible to admit that it was written to deal with common, everyday problems in which we become involved in our daily human routines. They may have grown up in a home where the family Bible was kept on a library table, and was treated like the ark of the covenant. No one touched it except to enter another name in the family register, or to tuck in a lock of the baby's hair, or hide the recipe for banana pudding. It was too sacred to read.

I am not upset by the fact that the letters were written to grapple with problems such as unemployment, job-hunting, sex, overeating, and laying up money for your children. It does not cheapen Jesus for me to realize that He became tired, hungry, thirsty, and that He sometimes cried. It helps me to know that He was tempted in all points as I am, and was without sin. I wish I could say that about myself. I am glad the living Word was clothed in the same kind of flesh in which I live, and I am happy that the written Word deals with mundane circumstances that "bug" me.

You probably recall the story of the shipwrecked foreign visitor who was treated kindly by a tribe of aborigines. When he was rescued and returned to his homeland, he decided to send his superstitious benefactors a token of his gratitude. Having observed that they had no way of calculating time, he presented them with a sundial. In their reverence for it, they built a roof over it. That is what many have done with the Word of God. Instead of using it, they have made an idol of it. Bibliolatry is as wrong as any other form of idolatry.

THE STUDY AT HAND

Having come to the end of this little stroll down a pleasant bypath, we can now return to the main road, and devote our attention to the letter to the Hebrews. Immediately we find ourselves with a few problems on our hands. From the time I was a lad I was always taught that one should not plunge headlong into a Scriptural letter without first settling a few preliminary matters. These include an identification of the author, the addressees, and additional information such as the geographical area and the historical background. As an aid to memory, we referred to them as the "Five P's in the interpretation pod." They consisted of the person writing, the people written to, the place, purpose, and period of the writing.

But the letter to the Hebrews is different! We can determine from the text who wrote the letter to the Romans. It starts with the words, "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ," and in the seventh verse says, "To all that be in Rome." The first letter sent to the Corinthians identifies the writers at once. They were Paul and Sosthenes. The second letter was written by Paul and Timothy. But there is no way of positively determining who wrote the letter we are to study. A good many able students think it was written by Barnabas. Several ancient writers assign it to his authorship. Others think it was written by Apollos, the Jew from Alexandria, Egypt, who was said to be "eloquent and mighty in the scriptures" (Acts 18:24). They call attention to the style of writing, and affirm that it is characteristic of the Alexandrian School.

In recent years I have become aware of an increasing number who speculate that Aquila and Priscilla may have collaborated in producing it, as a husband and wife team. Perhaps your Bible has the superscription, "The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews." This may be significant, but it is not conclusive. It probably was affixed some time after the letter began to be circulated. The fact remains, there is no way by

which we can now establish the authorship beyond question. Even in his day, Origen said, "Who wrote the Letter to the Hebrews, only God knows for certain."

When I am pinned down, and my arm is twisted, and am virtually forced into giving an opinion, I opt for Paul. I have read all that has been written in favor of his authorship, and all that has been written on the other side. After weighing it all, for me the scales are still tipped on the side of Paul. It is not essential for me to take the time to detail the store of internal and external evidence upon which I base my conclusion.

The same kind of mental quandary faces us in trying to identify the recipients of the letter. The writer nowhere says it was written "to the Hebrews." It was written to Jews who were thoroughly familiar with the law given to Israel, and with the history of those who lived under that law. They were children of the fathers to whom God spoke by the prophets, as we are informed in the opening sentence. The letter is a compendium of allusions to the law, priesthood, and tabernacle service. These would have been wholly unintelligible to the non-Jewish world, but every Orthodox Jew would have understood them without explanation.

I believe the letter was written to the "Hebrews," but who were the Hebrews? I think the answer is found in the book of Acts. When the number of the disciples in Jerusalem was multiplied, the first case of dissension arose. Luke, the author, writes, "There arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration" (6:1). The saints had disposed of their real estate holdings and deposited the sale proceeds with the apostles, who purchased food and dispensed it daily to every person, according to his need.

The Grecians were Hellenistic Jews. They had been born in such places as Mesopotamia, Pontus, Asia, Egypt, and Libya.

They spoke the language of the land of their nativity as well as Hebrew, in which their synagogue worship generally was conducted. The Hebrews were Palestinian Jews. Most of them were monolingual, speaking only the dialect of Palestine. I think the letter we are studying was addressed to the Palestinian Jews, especially to those who were residents of Jerusalem. I do not think the letter was written to the Diasporan Jews, those who were scattered abroad. James and Peter both wrote to the dispersed Jews, but the letter to the Hebrews was not for them.

The addressees had accepted Jesus as Lord, as is evident from many references in the body of the letter. But they were in grave danger of falling away and relapsing into Judaism, while renouncing the validity of the claims of Jesus as "the Apostle and High Priest of our profession" (3:1). Perhaps the pomp and ceremony, the panoply and pageantry of the temple, proved irresistible with the passing of the years. The disciples of Jesus constituted a despised minority. They were victims of harassment by the priests and politicians, and were regarded as outcasts and social pariahs. They may have looked with longing eyes at the splendor of the temple as the pilgrims convened for the high holy days, and contrasted all of this with their own gatherings in upper rooms and dingy dwellings on back streets as a kind of underground movement.

Whatever their reasoning might have been, many of them were in desperate danger of renouncing the faith and returning to their former status under the law. That is why the letter is full of admonitions and warnings. "We ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip" (2:1). "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God" (3:12). "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it" (4:1).

These are but a few statements from the first four

chapters, but they portray the urgent purpose of this letter. They could be multiplied to great length, but these will serve to show that the Jewish believers were in imminent danger of "flaking off" or "flacking out" on the faith, as the "now" generation would describe it. I am sure you will at once rush to the conclusion that believers are always in danger of returning to their past life, and every apostolic epistle is a warning against that tendency. That may be true, but there is a special dimension involved in this case. Properly understood, the letter will come alive. Without consideration of it, we may not grasp the meaning of what is said. Along with a great many scholars more eminent than I, I maintain that this epistle was written to Jewish believers in Jesus a very few years before the city of Jerusalem was besieged and destroyed by the Roman army under Titus. That was when the beautiful temple, which Herod the Great had spent forty-two years restoring and refurbishing, was utterly destroyed. This event brought to an effective conclusion the system of Judaism, which centered around the animal sacrifices on the brazen altar, and forever left unrivaled the atonement at the cross, which is God's only altar.

Jesus had predicted this cataclysmic event before His death. He had warned that Jerusalem would be surrounded with armies, that her desolation was near (Luke 21:20). He told His disciples that those who were in Judea should flee to the mountains. Those on the housetops should not come down to rescue personal belongings. Those in the field should not return home for their clothing. Because of the hardships involved, they were to pray that their flight would not be in the winter, nor on the Sabbath Day, when the gates of the city were shut. They would then encounter hostility from the Jews, who resented any person's making more than a Sabbath Day's journey.

Obviously, those who renounced their faith in Christ and remained in the city would be destroyed in a frightful period of tribulation unlike any other in history. This letter was written to encourage the disciples not to put their trust in Jerusalem, but to

abandon the city when the time came. It was pointed out that Jesus suffered outside the gate, and the admonition was given, "Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come" (13:13). Observe the significance of the statement, "Let us go forth . . . for here have we no continuing city." The earthly Jerusalem was doomed. It could provide no safety.

FORSAKING THE ASSEMBLY

The fact of the city's destruction also explains another passage, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (10:25). A great many people forget that this was written to Hebrew believers at a certain time and for a certain purpose. They think it was written to us who are living in the United States of America in the twentieth century. "The day approaching" was the day of destruction of Jerusalem. It was essential for the saints not to grow cold, or to drop out of the ranks, but that they seek the companionship of others to gain strength to resist the coming trials. They were not to exhort one another to assemble, but they were to assemble to exhort one another.

The writer is not talking about the weekly meetings, which became traditional in western culture when we were a frontier people. He wrote about daily gatherings, perhaps in small groups, to bolster one another in the resolution to remain firm. He says, "Exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (3:13).

Certainly the letter had some effect. Eusebius, the "father of church history," informs us that the disciples of Jesus, having been warned by him, fled to Pella and other places across the Jordan. There is evidence that not a single Christian perished in the siege or in the bloody aftermath. I think the letter to the

Hebrews was written for the specific purpose of encouraging the saints to resist enticements to leave the faith and return to Judaism. The importance of the letter to us is found in the admonition, "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession" (4:14).

W. E. Vine writes, "The Epistle is written to provide the great antidote to meet the dangers both of the true Hebrew believer and of those who were tending to become apostates." This is why I call this talk "The Great Antidote."

The Better Way

Contents

Let us suppose for a few minutes that you have been instrumental in leading a colony of emigrants from an area beset with distressing problems, into a new region that offered them real hope for the future. After a little time had passed, word was conveyed to you that some of them were becoming dissatisfied and were considering returning to their previous homeland. You knew that if they did so it would mean disillusionment and death. What kind of an appeal would you make to them in an attempt to get them to remain where they are?

It seems to me that the most effective thing you could do would be to present incontrovertible proof that their new state was better than the old, and that to revert to their former condition would be foolish. If you could cite the special features and advantages of their new state, it would have a greater effect in stabilizing them than anything else you could do. That is exactly the strategy employed by the author of the letter to the Hebrews. There are thirteen chapters in the letter, as we have divided it, and the word "better" occurs thirteen times.

I am not implying that each chapter contains the word "better," but it is an interesting fact that each chapter points up a way in which Jesus and the faith of which He is in the center are superior to the previous economy under which the Hebrews lived. We must be careful here. We dare not suggest that there was nothing good about their prior state. It was God who ordained the law, and wrote the basic covenant with His own

finger upon two tablets of stone. It was God who set up the tabernacle worship in the wilderness, after showing Moses a pattern by which this amazing tent was to be constructed. It would be rash to say that God created something of no value. The word "better" is a comparative term. It does not suggest that there is no good at all in the inferior element of the comparison. The law of Moses was perfectly adapted to the purpose for which it was instituted. The system it inaugurated was designed to fulfill the divine purpose until Jesus could come. The writer of Hebrews argues that by calling the present covenant a new one, God made the first one obsolete (8:13).

The New Covenant Scriptures deal with real human problems, and the letters that comprise these sacred writings are ideally constructed to solve those problems. The emphasis in each is different, and often one can determine the purpose of a letter by a word or phrase that recurs frequently. A good example is the letter to the Ephesians. It begins by defining the purpose, will, and pleasure of God, which is to unite all things in Heaven and earth together in one, even Christ (Ephesians 1:10). The word "together" is a key word throughout the letter. Since the letter to the Hebrews was intended to keep those who received it from relapsing into Judaism, we are not surprised to see the word "better" occurring over and over.

In the first chapter we are told that Jesus is better than angels (v. 4). This is very important because the Hebrews believed that God engraved the two tablets of stone through the agency of angels, and that angels conveyed the tablets to Moses. Stephen said they had received the law by the disposition of angels (Acts 7:53). Paul said, "It was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator" (Galatians 3:19). The writer strikes at the very heart of his argument when he lays down the premise that Jesus was superior to the very origin of the law. In the second chapter of Hebrews we are told that the message of Christ is better than that conveyed by angels under the first covenant. It is admitted that what the angels spoke was effective. Their

message was the message of God, and it was binding. Those who did not pay heed to it paid a penalty for disregarding it. Every transgression and disobedience received prompt and certain punishment. It is reasonable to conclude that, if such were the case under a system proclaimed by inferior beings, there will be no escape from the consequences of disregarding a message proclaimed by the Lord.

In the third chapter we are told that Christ is better than Moses. Moses was the apostle of God to ancient Israel. The word "apostle" refers to one sent on a mission. God called Moses at the burning bush and sent him to deliver His people from bondage. While Moses was the lawgiver, he could not be the high priest. His brother Aaron was accorded that honor. Jesus, however, is both "the Apostle and High Priest of our profession" (v. 1). It is admitted that Moses was faithful in God's house, but his faithfulness was that of a household servant working for another.

On the other hand, Jesus was a Son over His own house. He built His house of living stones, and was therefore deserving of more honor than the house. Just as a son is superior to a servant, so Jesus was to be honored above Moses. It is significant that the writer declares of Jesus, "whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end" (v. 6). That "confidence" is faith in Jesus. That "hope" is the joyful anticipation based upon that faith. To surrender faith in Jesus, to go back to a life of servitude under Moses, would mean forfeiture of the right to be a part of the house Jesus erected. The faithfulness of Moses is not derogated by the writer. He is simply placed in proper perspective with Jesus.

In the fourth chapter we are told that we have a better rest than that provided by Joshua in Canaan. Moses led the people out of slavery, and Joshua led them into a land that flowed with milk and honey, but there remained a greater rest than that. It is pointed out that God rested from His creative efforts upon the

seventh day. He did not resume working. The rest He then began is ceaseless and unbroken. It is unending and perpetual. This rest has been promised to the people of God.

The Seventh Day Adventists, preoccupied with the law given through Moses in order to validate their special observation of the seventh day of the week, are mistaken about the "rest" we are promised. It is not the seventh day of the week, but the rest that God began on that day into which we may enter. When we enter into that rest, we will not work creatively again. Our work will be ended, just as God ended His work: "For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his" (v. 10). The admonition that follows is especially appropriate: "Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest."

In the fifth chapter we are told that Christ has a better priesthood than that under the law. The high priest under the first covenant was not self-appointed. God called Aaron to his office. In the same way, Christ was ordained by divine decree. The distinctiveness of His calling is found in the fact that He was not of the lineage of Aaron. Instead, He was made a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek. Melchizedek was a unique king and priest, in that he had no earthly successor to office.

In the sixth chapter we are told that we have better promises than those given to Israel. There were two requirements of those who would receive the promises of old: faith and patience. The Hebrews were told in the letter that they must exhibit the same qualities. It is said of Abraham, "After he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise" (v. 15). Encouragement is given us to imitate his conduct as we "lay hold upon the hope set before us" (v. 18).

Faith is tested when that which is expected is deferred. Impatience erodes away trust and eats like a cancer at our

confidence. It caused Israel to murmur and complain against God. In spite of all the tremendous demonstrations of power in their behalf they reproached God, and many of them died in the wilderness. The superiority of the promises accorded to us should develop in our hearts a spirit that never succumbs to defeat.

In the seventh chapter we are told that Christ is better than Aaron. The reasoning employed here is superb. It is summed up in the conclusion that the descendants of Levi "became priests by the law of a carnal commandment." That is, there was nothing in the law that could convey life. The priesthood was subject to constant change by virtue of the death of the priests. The priests were not perfect. They were subject to frailty as much as those for whom they ministered. Even the high priest had to offer a sacrifice for his own sins (9:7).

The priesthood of Jesus is different. He is not a priest after the order of Levi, but of Melchizedek. The priesthood of Levi was changeable. That of Melchizedek was unchangeable. The priesthood of Levi was inaugurated without an oath. That of Christ has been validated by the oath of God, which makes it perpetual. The writer says that Jesus is a priest "after the power of an endless life" (v. 16). Further, "The law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore" (v. 28).

In the eighth chapter we are told that in Christ we have a better covenant. All relationship with God is upon a covenantal basis. God revealed himself as a covenant-making God. Why He did so is a divine mystery. By human rationalization it seems incredible that the one who is sinless in the absolute would choose to be associated in such a manner with sinful man. But God made covenants with Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and with the nation of Israel. All of those covenants are beggared in scope and nature by the one with which God entered into

agreement with us.

The writer tells of Moses, who was called up into Mount Sinai and shown a replica of the tabernacle, which was to be built by human hands out of natural materials. He immediately contrasts the order given to Moses under the first covenant with the ministration of Christ, which is termed "more excellent." Jesus is the mediator of the new covenant, as Moses was of the old covenant, so the covenant we now have is founded upon "better promises."

In the ninth chapter we are told that followers of Jesus have a better sacrifice. Under the first covenant, on the day of atonement the high priest went into the Holy of Holies. No other person ever was allowed access to this place of thick darkness behind the veil, where stood the ark of the covenant with the mercy seat. Because the high priest was human, he had to carry animal blood to sprinkle upon the mercy seat to make an atonement. Only the high priest could penetrate the veil, and then only once annually. The writer of Hebrews declares that this proves that the way into the holiest precinct, where the presence of God was apparent, was not made known as long as the covenant was in effect. He virtually exhausts the vocabulary to demonstrate the inferiority of the legalistic system of old. It was limited as to nature and duration, being only "a figure for the time then present." It was limited as to effect, since its gifts and sacrifices "could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience." It was involved only with meats, drinks, varied ceremonial cleansings, and ordinances of the flesh, which had been imposed on them "until the time of reformation."

The time of the glorious change was ushered in when Christ arrived as a high priest of good things to come. His was a greater and more perfect tabernacle. It was of divine construction, not made with hands. Jesus did not enter the Holy of Holies with the blood of inferior animals, but by His own

blood. As a result He obtained eternal redemption for us. His atonement was once for all. It was once for all time and once for all people. Our sacrifice is as superior as the immaculate Son of God is superior to bulls and goats.

In the tenth chapter we are told that Christ's followers have a better hope. This is important, because when man is hopeless he becomes helpless and miserable. Sometimes he becomes dangerous to himself and to others. The law was inadequate as a shadowy portent of good things to come. It required an endless cycle of animal sacrifices. In spite of the repetitious routine of blood-letting, it could never purge the conscience of sin. The impossibility of cleansing from sin by the blood of inferior animals was continually illustrated.

The coming of Jesus made possible our sanctification through the offering of His body. He offered one sacrifice for sins forever, and then assumed His position of authority at the right hand of God. His absolute conquest of sin and subsequent glorification made it possible for us to have "boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus" (v. 19). Because He is our high priest over the house of God, we can draw near to Him and worship with a true heart, in full assurance of our faith.

Our hearts have been sprinkled from an evil conscience by His blood. Our bodies have been washed in water at baptism. We are able to hold fast the profession of our faith without doubting. All of this is because He is faithful who promised. We can count on God. He is not going to forget or renege. "For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise" (v. 36).

In the eleventh chapter we are told that new believers have a better system of faith. This is a magnificent chapter, with its roll call of the faithful, beginning with Abel, and ceasing only because the writer ran out of time (v. 32). Faith is a firm conviction relative to hope— for things. It is a firm confidence

relative to things not seen as yet. Faith enabled Abel to offer a proper sacrifice, Enoch to escape death, and Noah to construct the ark. It prompted Abraham to become a nomad in a foreign land while "he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

I never read this chapter without feeling the cadence of marching feet, the tread of patriarchs coming out of the gray mists of the past, and facing the sunrise of the ages. Tramp, tramp, tramp— Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Gideon, Barak, Jephthah, Samson— all strangers and pilgrims on the earth. They were but a handful of the mighty host of conquerors "of whom the world was not worthy."

There is a grave danger, however, that we will misunderstand the reason for the insertion of this chapter. It is easy for us to slip into the error of thinking that this marvelous catalog of worthies has been included to show us how dependent we are upon them. The exact opposite is the case. The last two verses in the chapter are the clue. "And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect" (vv. 39, 40).

Their faith in God led them to stunning victories. They subdued kingdoms, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, and accomplished other great feats. All of these things took place before the "Word was made flesh" to dwell among us. Now that Jesus has been here to visit personally and has returned to glory, we realize that even death holds no fear or terror. The ancients looked forward to the "golden age" which is now ours. Something better has been bestowed upon us who live in this final age before the great culmination. What is ours is the crown upon all the promises ever made. Without us, even Abraham, the father of the faithful, never would be able to attain the ultimate. Jesus is the answer to every question, the solution to every problem, the fulfillment of every dream and the

revelation of God. He is the keystone that locks the arch of faith together. One leg of that arch embraces the faith of yesterday. The other embraces the faith of today. Jesus locks the old and the new together in an unbreakable unity.

In the twelfth chapter we are reminded that children of the King have a better kingdom. We are surrounded by an immense crowd of spectators, looking down upon us from the tiers of seats in the stadium of history. In view of this, we are obligated to make a creditable showing in the race in which we have enrolled. This means discarding the weights that were fastened to our ankles in the training sessions. It means throwing off the cloak of doubt that enshrouded us before coming on the track. It means running with dogged persistence the race before us, keeping our eyes fastened upon Jesus, the former winner who now waits on the throne at the end of the course.

The chapter includes some exhortations and warnings vital to our lives if we would be victorious. It should be read often by those who suffer depression because they feel their lot in life is too heavy to bear. Those who become discouraged because of external conditions, which they regard as the rod of the Lord, will gain a great deal of comfort from what is said about the love of the Lord for those whom He chastens. They are His legitimate children. Punishment is proof of parenthood.

For me, the climax of the whole letter is reached in the great contrast between the events that happened at Mount Sinai in the desert, and at Mount Sion, the dwelling place of God. Israel in the flesh came to the mountain, and they were forbidden to even touch it, under penalty of death. The mountain burned with livid flame, but still was an envelope of darkness. A tempest howled about the people with tornadic force. In the midst of the storm a trumpet sounded loud and clear from the summit of the peak. An awesome voice began intoning, "I am the Lord which brought you out of Egypt, and out of the land of slavery." As the sound echoed among the

rocky crags, the terror-stricken people cringed and pleaded that the words cease, because they could not stand them. They were trembling, frightened by the edict that even if a stray beast touched the mountain it would be stoned to death or have a dart thrust through its body. Even Moses later declared that the sight was so terrifying that he literally shook with fear.

In contrast to this picture of alarm, we are come to Mount Sion, the lofty, spiritual eminence, crowned with the city of the living God. This is the "new Jerusalem" described in the glorious imagery of Revelation 21. We have come to an innumerable company of angels, a host of celestial messengers that cannot be counted by man. John declared there were ten thousand times ten thousand, and myriads of myriads (Revelation 5:11). We have come to the general assembly and congregation of the firstborn ones whose names are enrolled in Heaven. We have come to God who is the judge of the universe.

We have come to the spirits of men who were justified and are now perfected. We have come to Jesus, who is the mediator of the new covenant. We have come to the blood sprinkled upon our hearts, which speaks of forgiveness of our sins. It is better than the blood of Abel, which cried out from the earth for avenging. We have received a kingdom that cannot be shaken. No convulsion of the earth, no catastrophe of the elements will move it. It is unshakable and secure. This is the ground of our hope amidst the towering wrecks of time.

In the thirteenth chapter we are told that we have a better altar. The first part of the chapter suggests our responsibilities as citizens in the unshakable kingdom. Briefly summarized, they are as follows: Verse 1: Our obligation to fellow citizens. Verse 2: Proper treatment toward strangers. Verse 3: Our duty toward the unfortunate. Verse 4: Right and wrong use of sex. Verse 5: The life of contentment and unselfishness. Without going into a detailed study, we note that "we have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle" (v. 10). The

altar was the center of the system revealed to Moses at Sinai. Atonement for sin was made at the altar. It was there that the blood of an innocent victim was poured out in the presence of God. We have an altar superior to the one made of acacia wood and overlayed with brass. Those who serve at such an altar, trusting in the blood of bulls and goats, have no right to share in the blessings of the altar where our sacrifice was made.

The cross of Jesus is central to the faith. It was there that the sanctifying blood was poured out. One who denies the reality of the cross has no right to its sustaining power. To deny Jesus and return to an inferior system is to invalidate the very purpose and goal toward which all animal sacrifices pointed. It is to love the shadow while rejecting the substance. It is to treasure the negative while refusing to look at the developed picture. It is to choose the fragmentary in preference to the perfect.

The Power of the Son

Contents

The letter to the Hebrews is unique in many ways. It appears to be more a treatise than a letter. This is evident with the opening sentence, which covers four verses in the Authorized Version. There is no customary greeting, "Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ." Instead, the writer begins with the word "God," and immediately states his proposition.

God is not silent. He is not dumb as were the gods made by men's hands. He is communicative. God has spoken. This fact is startling in its implications. If God has spoken from Heaven, man on earth must listen. It is unthinkable that a mortal would ignore a message from God. So Isaiah prefaces his disclosure of the words of God with the admonition, "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken" (1:2).

God has spoken in history, and His revelation has been made in two ages: "in time past" and "in these last days." The former refers to the whole period from the coming of man upon the earth to the coming of the Son of man to the earth. The "last days" designate the final age of God's dealing with man on earth. There will be no additional revelation until "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thessalonians 1:7, 8).

God has spoken to two classes of people, the fathers and ourselves. He has spoken through two kinds of agents, the prophets and His Son. The message in time past was presented in many parts and in many ways. Various means were employed to convey the divine instruction to the prophets. Various means were used to pass it on to the people. God used dreams, visions, angelic appearances, and natural phenomena to speak to the prophets. They in turn used not only direct communication, but all kinds of object lessons and dramatizations to portray what they had received from God.

The greatest revelation was reserved for the last age of mankind upon the earth. God had spoken to man by His Son. Jesus is the living Word. He is the very power through which all creation was spoken into existence. That Word "was made flesh, and dwelt among us." Men were thus able to see the glory of God manifested in a personality before their very eyes. The word of the Lord came to the prophets so they could speak of the Lord of the Word, or, of the Word who became Lord.

The Son is superior to the prophets. He is superior to the angels who appeared to the prophets. He is superior to the angels who delivered the tablets of stone to Moses upon Sinai. To turn one's back upon Jesus, and revert to the regime of the law, constitutes a spurning of the superior for the inferior. It is as if a mature person suddenly regressed into his former childhood state, babbling and prattling, and playing again with the toys he once discarded. Such a person in the physical realm is an object of pity. It is no sin to be a child, but it is a tragedy to remain one or to revert to childhood.

The superiority of Jesus over prophets and angels is demonstrated in seven declarations as to His power. No other intelligent being in the universe can qualify in these respects. The fact that God has spoken to us through one so dynamic is sufficient to demand the absolute attention of all who are aware of it. These seven power-packed attributes of the Son are a

means of strengthening our trust in Him to the glory of God. Perhaps these seven are mentioned because the number signified completeness, or perfection, to the Hebrews.

1. *The Son has been appointed heir of all things.* **Three truths are apparent in this brief statement: the Son is an heir, the inheritance is universal, and the heritage is by appointment. This is an affirmation of the power of divine relationship. In Romans 8:16 the apostle declares that the Holy Spirit bears witness with our own spirits that we are children of God. He then reasons, "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ" (v. 17). We are all sons of God, but Jesus is the Son of God in a unique way, and universal heirdom is based upon that sonship.**

There is, of course, one great difference between the way we become heirs of our earthly parents and the way Jesus is an heir of God. We inherit the possessions of a father upon his decease. We are made heirs by his death. This is not true in the case of Jesus. He is not the successor of His Father. The original word rendered, "heir" may have three connotations. It sometimes meant one who acquired something by casting lots. It was also used as we employ it today, to designate one who received his father's goods upon the death of the parent. But it was also used to describe one who was the possessor of anything appointed to him by another; that is, one who was a master or ruler over such an appointed possession.

Jesus said, "All things that the Father hath are mine" (John 16:15). To be a joint-heir with Christ means that the riches of God are available to me through Jesus. No prophet who preceded Jesus could claim to be heir of all things. The era of the prophets was an age of greatness, as men spoke when motivated by the Holy Spirit. But that Spirit now lives with us and in us, and we share in the patrimony of the Father because our Lord is the universal heir.

2. *The Son is the one by whom the worlds were made.* **This is the language of creative power. The Son was the divine agent in bringing about the creation. He was the instrumental cause employed by God. This is but one of several passages affirming this truth. John wrote, "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made" (1:3).**

The real purpose of the writer to the Hebrews was to demonstrate the surpassing dignity and power of Jesus. By affirming that the Son existed before all else, and was the agent through whom all else was brought into existence, he makes the worship of angels and other created beings an inferior system of praise. Any creator must exist before the creation and be superior to his creation. God's creation is the result of causes, and the prime cause is the divine intelligence. The implementary cause is the Word of God, which became flesh and lived among us as the only begotten Son. Every result must proceed from a cause, and the cause must be adequate to produce that result. That cause also must exist before the result, and the result must proceed from it. The power to produce a universe must be a universal power, and must be available before the universe itself.

3. *The Son is the brightness of God's glory.* **This signifies reflecting power, as we shall see by the study of the terms used. The word "glory" is an interesting one for the researchist in the development of language. It is a translation of** *doxa,* **from which our familiar "Doxology" is derived. Basically it meant "an appearance, a manifestation." From this it came to mean "honor," "praise," or "applause." This is the appropriate recognition given by one in whom reverence or adoration is aroused. Later derivations were "glory" or "splendor," signifying the state or condition inspiring or demanding praise.**

The meaning graduated to a significance relating to brightness, or dazzling light, and finally to the perfection characteristic of God. The ancient writers, poets, and prophets used it to signify divine perfection in the moral order, like the

sun in the physical universe. As one could not gaze with the naked eye full into the face of the sun without being blinded, so he could not stare directly into the face of God and live. Isaiah saw this glory as the "train of the Lord," which filled the temple (6:1). Ezekiel saw it as "a fire infolding itself, and brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the color of amber, out of the midst of the fire." He said, "This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord" (1:4, 28).

The Son is that brightness of God's glory. His disciple John described the new Jerusalem thus: "The city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof" (Revelation 21:23). All the splendor, majesty, beauty, and perfection associated with God are to be found in Christ. The word rendered "brightness" occurs nowhere else in the sacred Scriptures. It is therefore limited to the Son of God.

The word literally means "reflected splendor," the dazzling brilliance reflected by a luminous planet. This aptly describes the role of the Son. The rays of the sun in its meridian reflect the brightness of the heavenly body, so that one actually sees the rays rather than the sun. Likewise, as one looks at Jesus he sees in Him the manifestation of the glory of God, which is the light of the spiritual universe. "In him was life; and the life was the light of men" (John 1:4). We need to ponder a long time on the life that is light, the light of God reflected in a world of sin, which could neither overcome nor distort it.

4. *The Son was the express image of God.* **This relates to divine power. The word "image" is from another original, which occurs nowhere else in the New Covenant Scriptures. In its inception, it was the word designating a graving tool, and so it came to refer to something that was engraved or stamped out by a die. The Greeks employed it to designate the image or superscription of the emperor upon coins. It was also used of the impression made by a seal pressed into soft wax upon an official**

document.

It was translated into English as "character." As such it was applied to letters, numerals, or other marks or signs stamped upon articles for the purpose of identification. The simplest way to illustrate it is by the use of a rubber stamp. When such a stamp is pressed down upon an ink pad and then transferred to a sheet of paper, the image is the exact replica of that on the stamp. So Jesus is the "image of the invisible God" (Colossians 1:15). While we cannot see God, we know exactly what He is like from His "express image" manifested in the Son. As you can look at the imprint of a seal and see exactly what is on the die, so you can look at Jesus and see the revelation of God.

5. *The Son upholds all things by the word of His power.* **This is a description of sustaining power. There is a difference between this and creative power. It is one thing to design and manufacture an automobile and start it. It is a wholly different matter to keep it in running order until it has served its time. All things were created by the power of God's word, and all things are maintained by the word of God's power.**

We speak of "laws of nature," but there is no tangible proof that there are such laws. The expression represents our human way of trying to account for the regularity and consistency within our earthly existence. We set our watches by it, and project men to the surface of the moon because of it. The rotation of the earth, the march of the seasons, and the revolution of the planets, all of these force us to conjecture that the Master Designer who first pulled the switch to set the universe in motion also has to have computerized laws by which to maintain it.

I suspect that which we are seeing is the unvarying application of the word of divine power, so that the functioning of the intricate balance is a constant testimony to us of His

existence. It is not so much that He set up a code of laws called "nature." Rather, what we call nature is simply God touching His own creation, which responds to that touch, even as it came into existence through it. In our feeble attempt to account for it all, we invent terms and devise and publish scientific explanations. All of this is the human attempt to grasp something that inevitably escapes our grasp. It is beyond us. It comforts me to realize that the universe always is in God's hands, and that as a part of it I am also in His hands. I need not explain a snowflake to appreciate its beauty.

6. *The Son purged our sins by himself.* **This is a description of cleansing power. For many centuries man has used soaps and solvents to purify and whiten. Even the prophets of old mention "fuller's soap," and a fuller was a bleacher of cloth. It is an unfortunate thing, however, that the very detergents we use become pollutants. Streams are covered with foamy suds because detergents were flushed into them from the sewer lines of a great city. Fish die and vegetation turns yellow and withers. In an attempt at sanitation, we become unsanitary. In a desire to destroy germs, we destroy life.**

The master defiler of the ages is sin. Directly or indirectly, sin is the cause of all defilement in the universe. Man has no way of freeing himself from sin. He cannot undo a single act he has ever committed. He is helpless in the grip of his carnal nature, like one caught in quicksand. His very struggle to extricate himself drives him more deeply into the sucking mass. He has to be freed by one from the outside. He cannot save himself. He must have a Savior.

Blood is the only "detergent" that can cleanse or purge man from sin, and Jesus provided this cleansing himself. The expression with which we are concerned could mean one of two things. It could mean that Jesus purged our sins without the aid of another. The inference is that He had no assistance but acted alone. The statement could also mean that Jesus purged our sins

by sacrificing himself. He did not employ the blood of bulls, goats, or any other substitute. This is probably what is meant. In Hebrews 8:27 it is made clear that as a high priest Jesus did not need to offer a daily sacrifice for sin, because He did it once for all when He offered up himself.

Whatever the meaning, one thing is certain. What we could not do for ourselves Jesus did for us. No man can purify himself, but Jesus purged the sins of all men. He was God's redeeming agent and we are the redeemed, purified and made fit for the Master's use. The cross lifted the curse, the blood bathed away the baseness, and grace gave us gladness in the divine presence.

7. *The Son sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.* **This is the language of ruling power, of universal authority. The right hand always signifies the position of special authority. Thus Jesus said to Caiaphas, the high priest, "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Matthew 26:64). Paul wrote that God raised Jesus from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in "the heavenly places," where He is above all principality and power, might and dominion (Ephesians 1:20, 21). Peter, who witnessed the Lord's ascension, substantiates this with the assertion that Christ has gone "into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him" (1 Peter 3:22). Jesus uses His position in a special way for those who are His servants. "Who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" (Romans 8:34). This shows that Jesus still labors in our behalf. He is our intercessor at God's right hand.**

At the risk of being boresome by repetition, let me once more remind you that the writer has a purpose in outlining these special powers accruing to Jesus by virtue of His nature and character. He is demonstrating that to reject Jesus, and return to the powerless and legalistic framework of Judaism, is to

degenerate. It is to substitute the worse for the better, the least for the greater, the weaker for the stronger. It is to return to the degradation of bondage after having been set free by the grace of God.

Jesus possesses the power of divine relationship, creative power, reflecting power, divine power, sustaining power, cleansing power, and ruling power. He is both the center and the circumference of the moral universe. Anything that does not proceed from Him has no validity; anything that does not draw men to Him has no veracity. He is either Lord of all in our lives, or He is Lord of nothing at all! One cannot manipulate Him who is all in all!

Better Than Angels

Contents

It is interesting that, after the writer points out the superiority of Jesus over the prophets, he turns at once to prove that He was even better than angels. The word "angel" also means "messenger," but the angels are celestial beings, not subject to human limitations. There are seven reasons assigned to prove that Jesus is better than the angels, and the question naturally arises as to why the writer spends so much time and effort upon the matter. Why did he not merely state it as a fact and proceed with his theme?

The answer can be found in the attitude of the Hebrews toward angels at the time. Because of that attitude, nothing could be more important than to show that the Son was superior to these heavenly messengers. It was believed that there were millions of angels surrounding the throne of God. All of these were ready to do divine bidding in a moment. They went forth from the throne and returned to it like flashes of light. They were regarded as intermediaries between Heaven and earth. Anything that affected the world of mankind was directed by angels.

An angel supervised the seasons, regulating the coming of spring and winter. Another had charge of the sea and its waves. Another ruled over the trees, granting or withholding fruits according to whether or not the populace was deserving. There were angels of rain, hail, thunder, lightnings and earthquakes.

What the Jews had done, of course, was to take the ancestral record of appearances by angels and elaborate upon them, until they had worked out an intricate system through speculation. This had been handed down from one generation to another until it had been accepted with confidence and unquestioning submission. It is interesting that the writer to the Hebrews did not take time to correct all of the errors. That was not the author's purpose in writing, and he adhered steadfastly to his purpose.

The Jews believed the angels were intermediaries between God and men. They were celestial bridges across the chasm between divine and human. This is why the Jews readily accepted the idea that the law was given by the disposition of angels (Acts 7:53; Galatians 3:19). Since that law was the covenant engraved upon stones, it was surmised that God was too majestic and glorious to contact the hands of a man directly, even when that man was Moses. It was believed that had He done so, Moses would have died upon the spot because of the magnitude of the glory He would have faced. Angels were employed to give him the tablets of stone. Even then his face glistened with such brilliance that he had to cover it so the Israelites could look at him.

If it could be proven that there was one superior to angels, one who was personally "the covenant" of God, this would forever establish the supremacy of that one. To reject Him and return to a system inaugurated by angels would be the height of folly. Angels merely carried the words of God. Jesus *was* **the Word of God. Angels bore two tablets of stone hewn out of a mountain. The Word had spoken the very mountain into existence. Angels conveyed the law to man. Jesus fulfilled that law as a man. Seven proofs of the superiority of Jesus over angels are given. As we note these arguments, let us investigate them through the Hebrews' eyes, as far as possible.**

1. *A name.* **By inheritance, Jesus has obtained a more**

excellent name than the angels (1:4, 5). The context shows that the name referred to is Son of God: "For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?" The word "inheritance" employed in verse 4 has to do with rank or place, and it is because of His superior position in the universe that Jesus is recognized by the Father as "my Son." We use the word "name" as a person's designation, but here it implies much more. Involved in a name are all of the characteristics, attributes, and functions that are associated with the person who is receiving the designation.

It is true that angels were called "sons of God," and saints are also said to be sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. "My Son," however, belongs to only one person in the universe. It is His in a particular and peculiar sense, and it exalts Him to a rank and dignity above that of all created beings, whether in Heaven or on earth.

2. *An exalted position.* **Jesus has, by divine decree, a position of worship from angels (v. 6). Nothing demonstrates the exalted state of the Son more than that the angels have been placed under a divine fiat to bow the knee, or prostrate themselves, before Jesus as their sovereign. The expression of adoration and the recognition of reverence demonstrate the subjection of the angels, while proving the superior dignity of the Son. The lesser worships the greater.**

3. *A throne.* **The Son occupies a throne that is forever and ever (v. 8). Angels are spirits, serving the bidding of the monarch of the universe. The throne is the symbol of rule. It indicates a reign over a dominion. In this case the dominion includes the whole created spectrum of which the angels are a part.**

4. *A scepter.* **The Son wields a scepter of righteousness (v. 8). A scepter was generally a rod or wand held in the hand of a king while administering the affairs of government. It was a badge of authority and a visible symbol of the power vested in**

the one who held it. With the scepter the king could bestow honor upon worthy subjects by touching them with it. By a simple gesture with it he could decree the death of those who had disgraced themselves or offended his dignity. It was an instrument of life and death.

Angels have no such power. They may carry out the wishes of Him who wields the scepter, but may not impose their will in opposition to His will. The scepter of Jesus is one of absolute authority. Even the angels are subject to the power of Jesus.

5. *A superior anointing.* **The Son has been anointed with the oil of gladness above His companions (v. 9). Under the Old Covenant, the prophets, priests, and kings were anointed as a ceremony of induction into office. Oil was poured upon the head as a public certification that the one so anointed was given full power to carry out a special function. The "oil of gladness" is an allusion to the perfumed oil that was used in the inauguration ceremony. It is a symbol of the joy and exultation of the universe at the consecration and coronation of the Son.**

There are many and varied views as to the identity of the "fellows" associated with Him. Because of the whole tenor of the reasoning, however, I conclude that it refers to the angels. Certainly there is no question that they were His associates in Heaven, and superior anointing would indicate a function above or beyond their own. While some expositors conjecture that the passage means the Son was given a superior anointing to other kings, the term "oil of gladness" indicates to me an anointing above that of other celestial beings as well.

6. *A special place.* **The Son is to sit at the right hand of God until His enemies are all conquered (v. 13). The question is raised as to when God ever invited an angel to occupy the place at His right hand until all of his enemies were subdued. No angel was ever accorded such an honor or position of preferment. Jesus will rule until the final enemy is dethroned and destroyed,**

and the last such enemy to be vanquished is death.

7. *Service of angels.* **The angels are simply ministering spirits sent forth to serve the heirs of salvation (v. 14). Although we are in the flesh, the angels have been assigned to serve our needs, and to carry out the will of God in our behalf. It is possible that they do much more for us than we realize, and a great deal that we may credit to other agencies. One who denies that angels assist in his life thereby denies that he is an heir of salvation. But the point the writer is making here is that the Son is seated at God's right hand receiving all homage, while angels are busy in the universe as servants and assistants to human beings.**

"THEREFORE— "

All of this has been said leading up to the opening sentence of the next chapter. While a division into chapters and verses may serve as a convenience in locating a statement or passage, it may also act as an impediment to understanding the thought. The first word of the second chapter is "therefore." This is the clue to tell us that what follows is a conclusion based on the previous reasoning. The writer has produced seven reasons why Jesus is better than angels. He now deduces that we need to pay more careful attention to what we have heard from Jesus than did those who received the message of angels.

He does not depreciate what angels spoke. Indeed, he declares that it was so authoritative that every violation or deviation was properly punished. His point is clear. If God would not tolerate disregard for the message of angels, who act as mere servants of transmission, He surely will not permit us to slight, ignore, or neglect the great salvation that was first announced by the Lord himself. Let us read the admonition and warning: "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let

them slip" (2:1).

Apparently this is intended to point up a great danger. Merely hearing or receiving the things God has revealed is not enough. We must heed them and diligently attend to them. If we do not, we may let them slip. What does this mean? To me, it is one of the most intriguing terms I have ever studied. The original word means "to flow by" "to run as a stream," "to slip away," "to glide past." Let me tell you about some of the interesting usages of the word in the days of the apostles.

Your center reference reads "to run out like leaky vessels." I know what that means. I grew up on a farm where we had to carry water from a spring. The house was on top of a hill, and the spring was at the foot. As a lad I always wondered why they could not be reversed. I do not recall that we ever had a bucket without a hole in the bottom. We generally plugged the hole with a rag, but when we filled the bucket the rag came out, and it was a race to get back up the hill and in the house before the water ran out.

Something like this happens with the truths we have heard from God's revelation. We do not need to make an effort to erase them from memory. All it takes is to neglect them, and soon we find that "our skimmer is leaking." Not long ago I met a man who had been a Bible Bowl winner a few years ago. He won contests for his memory of Bible facts, but now he hardly remembers a thing he once knew. It had run out as from a leaky vessel. It is to avoid such a disastrous consequence that we should give the more earnest attention to the gospel truths we have heard.

The Greeks used the original word for "slip" to describe many things. If a woman was washing dishes or clothes, and her ring slipped from her finger, this word was used to describe what happened. It was also used when a particle of food "slipped" into the esophagus in the act of swallowing. Neither of

these was the result of a purposeful action. We do not plan to forget the Word of God. We do not chart a course of forgetfulness. We do not deliberately erase truths that have been inscribed upon the blackboard of consciousness. They simply fade away, or slip into the limbo of forgetfulness because of neglect.

But there is another usage of the word. I want to mention this because it may well have been the very thought intended by the writer. It was employed to describe what happened when a ship was carried by the current past the wharf and out to sea, or when such a vessel slipped its hawser and was carried by the wind away from the harbor without the captain's being aware of it. One factor that makes this explanation appealing is that the word translated "more earnest heed" also had a maritime significance. It was used to describe tying a ship securely to the dock. Perhaps the writer is saying that we need to be certain that we are properly tied and anchored, so we will not allow ourselves to be swept away and out into the spiritual deep through carelessness and indifference.

This is one of our greatest problems! There are not many of us who become involved in what the world regards as grave sins. Many of us merely forget to feed our spirits. The inner man fails because of malnutrition. The Hebrews were defecting from the faith because of lack of patience. They did not have the strength to hold on. For this reason they were exhorted to "hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end" (3:14). Because of this they were told to be careful, to follow the example of those who inherit the promise through faith and patience (6:12).

In view of the purpose of the letter to the Hebrews, I would like to suggest four essentials in obeying that charge. These commend themselves as being worthy of our attention, if we would preserve our conviction and "lay hold upon the hope set before us" (6:18). Since this letter of warning and

encouragement was intended to stimulate constancy among the Hebrews, it seems appropriate to draw from its depths those things we need to emphasize.

1. *The word preached must be mixed with faith.* **The writer specifically says, "The word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it" (4:2). My faith must be limited only by the testimony of the gospel. I cannot be selective with God's revelation. I cannot choose to believe what seems reasonable and reject what I cannot validate by my own rational powers. As a human being my mind is not always accurate in its deductions. If I am persuaded that a thing declared by the Spirit is a fact or a truth (and there is a difference), I am obligated to accept it in faith. If I do not, my problem is not with the declaration, but with my concept of God.**

The ancients heard the word of God, but it produced no profit because they did not match it with faith. The Word is divine. There is no weakness in it. It is thoroughly adapted to accomplish the divine pleasure. But not until the thing proclaimed or the thing heard is believed will it profit us. The Word must become our flesh. It must be translated into personal conviction and acceptance. One may starve to death in the presence of food. Not the food served, but the food eaten and assimilated, maintains life.

2. *We must come boldly to the throne of grace.* **This is essential for one to "find grace to help in time of need" (4:16). Many of us are still living under the spirit of the written code given at Sinai. We are living B.C. lives in an A.D. world. We have allowed ourselves to think a great chasm separates us from our High Priest, while no such chasm exists, He is near to us. He does not separate himself from us by the dignity of His office. He is not a sacerdotal specialist who alone can enter precincts that are off limits to the rest of us. He is not aloof!**

Our High Priest is not cold and calculating. You do not

have to write Him for an appointment. You do not have to ring the bell, and wait for the secretary to admit you. Actually, He is the door! The writer tells us He can be touched with the feeling of our weakness. He understands the temptation syndrome because He was in all points tempted just as we are. He did not give up, give out, or give in. He was without sin!

It is upon this basis we are invited, and even urged, not only to come to the throne of grace, but to come boldly. We do not need to come cringing, as though expecting a blow. We do not need to come with reticence, as if expecting a rebuke. The very fact that the throne is one of grace should encourage us. The very word means "undeserved kindness," so we need not be concerned as to whether or not we are worthy. We can assume that we are not, but it is precisely for such persons as ourselves that the throne is designed. We furnish the need. He furnishes the grace to help, and no need can be greater than His grace.

3. *We must exhort one another daily.* **There is little hope that any of us will make it alone. When a single coal of fire pops out of the fireplace, it glows brightly for a few minutes on the hearth, then turns into gray ash. God drew the called-out ones into a fellowship, not for His benefit, but for ours. We stimulate and inspire one another. The word "exhort" means to encourage another to do what he already knows is right. Sometimes it becomes a little difficult to hold on. It seems as if it would be easier to simply let go and fall away.**

We are to exhort each other daily because of the "deceitfulness of sin" (3:13). The word "deceit" means "mirage," which leads one on, promising something it cannot deliver. It may appear as an imaginary oasis in the desert, leading a weary and famishing traveler on to his death. Others may be able to see when we are following a will-o-the-wisp, a figment of the imagination, and they can direct us back to the path of reality. Note that we are to exhort one another. This is an expression for mutual sharing. It is not a one-way street. We should encourage

each other, and we should do it daily. When we meet on the street, or in a place of business, we should not take leave of one another without speaking a word of comfort and strength. By such a means we can help each other to give more earnest heed to the things we have heard.

4. *We must cultivate a spirit of diligence.* **This enables us to place all of life in a proper frame of reference. Suffering will not overcome us but will be recognized as a constructive tool to develop obedience. We will realize that even Jesus, "though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered" (5:8). Instead of becoming depressed by suffering, we will seek to know what facet of obedience we need to learn. Thus suffering becomes a learning experience, not a damaging or destructive force.**

We will not be inclined to lapse into slothfulness. We will remain alert, not become apathetic. The instructions given to the Hebrews, as they faced the temptation to conform to the social culture about them, are as relevant today as the editorials in the morning newspaper. For the child of God, they are even more relevant!

Signs of an Apostle

Contents

Every careful student of the sacred Scriptures soon becomes aware that, from ancient times, God has made use of men to convey His will to humanity. In His revelation to Isaiah God said, "Take thee a great roll, and write in it with a man's pen" (8:1). The revelation was to be recorded in the language used by men in preparing human documents. It was to be preserved in a scroll according to the custom of the day. Of the gospel Paul declares that we "have this treasure in earthen vessels" (2 Corinthians 4:7).

So unvarying was the practice that the prophet Amos affirms, "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets" (3:7). Amos was tending a herd of livestock when he was called to go to a foreign province and cry out against sin.

The Hebrew word generally translated "prophet" is *nabi.* **It means "to bubble up." The divine message became effervescent in the heart of the prophet. He had to declare it, regardless of personal consequences. Sometimes the word** *nataph* **was employed. This means "to drop." In our generation, we are aware of the power of radio stations to direct their signals and to channel their broadcasts to certain points of the compass. God also employed such controlled broadcasting, using the prophets as His antennae. Ezekiel said the word of the Lord came to him, and his "program instructions" were, "Set thy face toward the south, and drop thy word toward the south" (20:46).**

Spoken through the prophets, the word of God was authoritative. It demanded the attention and compliance, not because of its transmitters, but because of its Originator. The heavens were summoned to hear, and the earth to listen, because the Lord had spoken (Isaiah 1:2). Jeremiah uses the word "hearken" about forty times. Most of these are in condemnation of those who were stubborn and rebellious, refusing the counsel of the Lord. While Isaiah uses the word "obey" only once, Jeremiah uses it twenty-nine times. More than half of these are negative, such as, "Ye have not obeyed my voice, saith the Lord."

The writer to the Hebrews affirms that the word conveyed by messengers before the coming of Christ was stedfast. He uses the word three times in his letter, and every time it refers to something firm, sure, or solid. It is used to describe the revelation of God (2:2), the nature of our faith (3:14), and the hope we have as an anchor (6:19). The revelation given through angels and prophets was not to be taken lightly by those to whom it was addressed: "Every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward." To transgress was to go beyond the revelation. To disobey was to fall short because of inattention or unconcern. Either type of failure was punished by just retribution.

SALVATION

God's message spoken in "these last days" is summed up in the expression "great salvation." The Hebrews, to whom the letter was written, were accustomed to the word. The concept was expressed in their own word *yasha,* **which was translated either "Joshua" or "Jesus." In their Scriptures it was used to denote various meanings, such as saved, helped, preserved, rescued, defended, and delivered.**

The Lord "saved" Israel out of the hand of the Egyptians

(Exodus 14:30). When the soul of David was depressed and frustrated, he praised God for His "help" (Psalm 42:5). The Lord "preserved" David wherever he went (2 Samuel 8:6). All these are renderings of the same word, which is also translated "rescue" one time, and "deliver" eleven times. In spite of all the great deeds done for God's people in the past, they were taught that a greater salvation would be theirs with the coming of the Messiah, the great emancipator.

In a particularly beautiful passage, Isaiah describes it from the standpoint of a city preparing for the coming of a king. The inhabitants issue from the gates to prepare the road leading to the city. They grade and smooth the highway, gathering out the stones that might prove to be impediments, and elevating banners as rallying points. "Behold, the Lord hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him" (Isaiah 62:11). It is noteworthy that the "salvation" coming is a person. It is He who will reward, and He who will achieve God's mission in the earth.

The writer to the Hebrews affirms that the long-awaited and expected Salvation *has* arrived. It is identified with the Son of God. Heaven's great "rescue mission" is in operation. The "preservation project" is proceeding on schedule. The "deliverance drive" is going forward. It would be a terrible tragedy for a world to wait centuries for salvation, only to ignore its arrival and "fall away" (Hebrews 6:6).

The gravest danger is neglect. This sin is especially frightening, because it requires no effort, no study, no calculation. In every realm of creation, it corrupts, corrodes, and decays. Neglect to paint a house, and eventually rot sets in, and the building sags down to the ground. Neglect to place expensive machinery in a shed, and rust will someday render it useless. Neglect to service an automobile, and you have unintentionally begun ruining a beautiful piece of equipment.

In the domestic realm, neglect to express love and concern and you will destroy the tie that binds. In the intellectual realm, neglect of study and assignments will produce failure. In the physical realm, neglect of the eyes may cause blindness, neglect of the teeth causes their decay. One need not deliberately commit suicide to die. He can simply neglect taking the medicine prescribed by his doctor. He need not jump from the top ledge of a skyscraper. He can neglect to watch the flow of traffic while crossing a busy street. The man who neglects repairing the gas heater in his home may kill his family as surely as the berserk intruder.

In the moral realm, neglect to reinforce the character by resolution and determination, and the result will be dissolution and degeneration. The word for "neglect" is *ameleo,* **which means "careless." It signifies a state in which one is indifferent or unconcerned. To neglect the great salvation provided for us is to slam the door on our only avenue of escape from destruction. It is to cut off our last hope, and to guarantee our utter loss. One is not being neutral by such neglect, for neglect is a deliberate choice to ignore God's offer of amnesty and deliverance. It is like refusing to sign the document that would make one eligible for pardon and a new life.**

The great salvation was first announced by the Lord. John the Baptist was the forerunner who prepared the way of the Lord, but it was the Lord who first made known that the time of deliverance had come. Once when He visited the town of Nazareth, where He lived and worked as a boy, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath Day, as was His custom. He stood up to participate in the prophetic reading, and the attendant handed Him the scroll of Isaiah. He unrolled it until He came to the lesson for the day, and read: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable

year of the Lord" (Luke 4:18, 19).

Having read the designated portion, He handed the scroll back to the congregational servant who returned it to the ark where the sacred writings were kept. He sat down, and all eyes were turned toward Him as the people waited for any comment upon the reading. He began by saying, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears" (Luke 4:21). It will be noted that "preach" occurs three times in this one passage. The gospel was to be preached to the poor, deliverance was to be preached to the captives, and the time of acceptance was to be preached to all. Jesus first announced the deliverance that was made possible through His sacrifice. The very fact that the Good News was first released by the Son himself is an argument in favor of the greatness of the deliverance it offered.

The apostles continued announcing the message after the Son returned to glory. They were called and commissioned for this very thing. He told them while He was yet with them, "Ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning" (John 15:27). One of the qualifications of an apostle was to be a constant companion of Jesus from the time of His baptism by John until He was received up into glory (Acts 1:22). During the interval between His resurrection and ascension, He gave them full instructions. They were to be witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the outer bounds of the known world. Certainly the Hebrews to whom this letter was addressed were exposed to this testimony, and had accepted it as valid.

That there might be no question as to the divine nature of the revelation, God personally intervened by signs and wonders of an undeniably supernatural origin. These were intended to establish the fact that the message carried by these men was not a mere human invention. The Hebrews were aware that, from the time of Moses, God had revealed that by the mouth of two or three witnesses all testimony would be established (Deuteronomy

19:15). Accordingly, the great salvation had a threefold attestation. The Son proclaimed it during His earthly sojourn. The chosen envoys continued to preach it after His return to Heaven. To remove all doubt as to the origin of the message, God confirmed it through miraculous phenomena.

The purpose of the writer in introducing the matter is not at all to discuss the relationship of miracles to the ongoing proclamation of the gospel. He writes of the matter almost casually, and with his one brief statement drops it. His purpose is simply to prove that the great salvation was proclaimed in a way superior to the messages brought previously by prophets and angels. Because of this it should be given more diligent heed. It must be that the Hebrew believers were aware of the signs, wonders, and varied miracles accompanying the apostolic proclamation, because the writer makes no attempt to convince them that they transpired. If they knew nothing about them they would hardly have been introduced as confirmatory proof. A lengthy apology for their reality would have been necessary, which would have amounted to "proving the proof."

Because of this, I could drop the matter here and say no more about it without doing injustice to my purpose. Because of the present universal excitement about miracles and spiritual gifts, however, if I were to do that, you would feel I had cheated you. You would be left wondering what I thought about them. It is gracious of you to permit me to extend this session at length in order to express my views on a subject that is only peripherally related to my theme. I realize that whatever I say will not merit the approval or agreement of all of you, because you share a number of different ideas about the matter. I shall content myself with expressing my thoughts without sitting in judgment upon you, for I love you all.

MIRACLES AND GIFTS

I shall try to limit myself as much as possible to the discussion of supernatural acts as related to the confirmation of the apostolic testimony. I'll not jump on a charismatic horse and ride off in all directions at once. Some of you will be disappointed in this intention, but I prefer to stay as close as I can to the subject I agreed to discuss. Perhaps we should begin by talking a little bit about the relationship of testimony to faith. This is the real reason the subject of supernatural acts as confirmatory evidence is introduced. Faith is the belief of testimony. Where there is no testimony there can be no faith. The ability to believe can no more be exercised where there is no testimony than the ability to see can be exercised where there is no light. It is utterly impossible to believe in one of whom you have never heard. All testimony has to do with facts. It consists of a report or declaration of those things to which the witness has been personally exposed, or of which he has had experience. The revelation of God consists of historical facts, all of them related to the person of Jesus, and what God has done for man through Him. These facts are summed up in the most profound proposition of all ages: that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God.

The gospel is simply the announcement to the world of what God did for man in an historical breakthrough of the flesh curtain. The faith that culminates in a restoration of the divine-human relationship is simply the assent to these facts and the commitment to Jesus as a result of that faith. Man is so constituted by the Creator that he believes only what is rendered credible to him. He cannot believe what appears to be incredible. In order to produce faith, testimony must be confirmed. The fact about which testimony is given is one thing, the testimony about the fact is another, and the confirmation of the testimony is still another. Confirming testimony means to make it believable, that is, to provide the mind with the necessary power or proof to believe.

There are two realms in which intellectual beings or personalities exist. For want of better terms to describe them, we

refer to them as the natural and supernatural. The natural mind may receive testimony about facts that originate in either of these realms, but in order to believe them, it must have confirmation to render them credible.

Facts related to ordinary occurrences in the natural realm require only ordinary or natural confirmation. It is judged sufficient to have two or three witnesses, who have had proper access to the facts, to testify concerning them. If their testimony is corroborative and not contradictory, it is considered that the fact is substantiated to the degree that belief is warranted. Even discrepancies are not considered as invalidating, if all of the witnesses agree on the point at issue. We need to distinguish between discrepancies and contradictions.

In developing laws by which testimony is rendered credible, men through the ages have concluded that an oath for confirmation should be the end of all contention or strife. Such an oath binds a witness to disclose the truth under the sanction of an outside power greater than himself. Even a court, vested with full authority, can make no greater demand than a solemn oath administered by a proper official, to assure veracity of testimony.

While natural facts require natural confirmation, supernatural facts require supernatural confirmation. Mere human testimony is not enough to confirm a supernatural fact. Such a fact never can be made credible by a subjective experience, emotion, or feeling. None of these can be tested by the law of valid testimony. They cannot be subjected to cross-examination to determine the authenticity of the construction placed upon them by one who would obviously be prejudiced in making an assessment.

The supernatural proof must be furnished by the Holy Spirit who is the divine agent of revelation and confirmation. We must look to the Spirit for those acts that render believable the

facts related to the incarnation. When Paul writes to the called-out saints of the heathen city of Corinth, he mentions that they were enriched by Christ "in all utterance, and in all knowledge; even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: so that ye come behind in no gift" (1 Corinthians 1:5-7). Later, Paul referred to both utterance and knowledge as specific gifts of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:8-10). They existed as assurances that the testimony of Jesus was true.

The fact that the saints lacked no gift in confirmation of the testimony was not a matter for pride or boasting. While the apostle thanked God for the grace that was given them, he remembered that greater confirmation is required only when more skepticism is manifested. God never wastes His power, nor does He ever employ more divine energy than is required to accomplish His purpose. The abundance of confirmatory gifts at Corinth may speak eloquently of the hardness of their hearts, rather than of their worthiness.

The relationship of the apostle to the congregation at Corinth is very revealing. Paul declares that, even if it could be proven that he was not an apostle to others, it was abundantly evident that he was an apostle to them. He said, "The seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 9:2). The word translated "seal" is *sphragis.* **It refers to an impression made in wax by a die, or by a seal. The impression would prove that the seal existed. Many congregations were planted by men who were not apostles, but there was something about Corinth that left no room for doubt.**

Paul asserted that he needed no letter of commendation from them. Instead, the congregation itself was his letter, and all men could read and know this. What was so important about Corinth? I suspect the answer may be found in 2 Corinthians 12:12: "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds." The word translated "mighty deeds" in the King James Version is

dunamis, **the very term as the one found In Hebrews 2:4 and translated "miracles." The signs of an apostle that were patiently demonstrated in Corinth are here described and designated as "signs, and wonders, and miracles."**

In view of the strong intimation that an apostle had to be personally present to impart a spiritual gift (Romans 1:11), it is conceivable that wherever spiritual gifts were found, the proof of apostolic labor was at once evident. To this it will be objected that others besides the apostles exhibited spiritual endowments and gifts. Indeed this is true, and no place is a better example of it than Corinth, which came behind in no gift. Yet, the very profusion of gifts was proof that an apostle had been there. If such gifts had been received at Corinth without an apostle having been present, they could hardly be said to be "signs of an apostle."

If, on the other hand, the chosen of God were granted the validating power to render their testimony credible, such supernatural gifts and miracles would be clear evidence, wherever they were seen, that an apostle had been present. If these supernatural gifts were channeled through the apostles, any other person who manifested such gifts or powers would at once be recognized as having been in contact with an apostle.

Jesus has no such ambassadors upon earth today. An ambassador is a minister with special powers sent forth by a sovereign ruler to act for the authority that commissioned him. He is an accredited diplomatic agent of the highest rank, endowed with the authority to announce terms of peace to alien powers. As the inherent sovereign of the universe, Jesus called and qualified twelve men to act as His ambassadors, and when all authority had been given Him in Heaven and on earth, He committed to them the ministry of reconciliation. He commissioned them to go to all nations and take the good news of reconciliation, wherewith He made men free. They were appointed ambassadors-at-large.

Their position was unique. They had no successors to office, for the simple reason that they fulfilled their mission during their lifetime. Now the King exercises authority over those subjects who submit to Him upon the basis of the gospel, that is, "the faith once for all delivered to the saints."

Just as any ambassador must carry credentials to assure the validity of his claims, so the ambassadors of Jesus had to demonstrate their credentials to gain credence for their message. Theirs was a message of supernatural intervention in human affairs. Since the King who appointed them as His personal representatives occupied the throne room of Heaven, their credentials had to be extraordinary and supernatural. So we read that, after they had received their appointment, "they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following" (Mark 16:20).

In view of the fact that this is a disputed passage, I leave it to you to determine how you will regard it. As I have explained it, it makes little difference if Mark penned it or not. It is exactly what one would expect to find as the result of the ambassadorial commission. The "signs following" are the credentials, the only kind of credentials that would serve the purpose. One who bears a supernatural message needs supernatural confirmation of his claims.

BACK TO HEBREWS

With this having been said, we are now ready to return to our study of the letter to the Hebrews. The "great salvation" was first spoken by the Lord. It was then proclaimed by those who heard Him from the beginning of His public ministry to its conclusion, when He returned to the Father. They were not alone in their proclamation, because the Holy Spirit was sent in the name of the Son to teach them all things, and to bring to their remembrance whatever Christ had said to them while He

was with them (John 14:26). The Spirit guided them into all truth, and showed them things yet in the future. In order to render their testimony credible, confirmatory evidence was provided in the form of signs, wonders, miracles, and diverse gifts of the Spirit.

It was in this fashion that God bore witness to the truth of their declaration. There was no other way to do so, since supernatural facts must be made credible by supernatural evidence. Signs, wonders, and miracles are not necessarily three types of evidence. In the first place, there is no special word for "miracles" in the original. The term is translated from the word *dunamis,* **which means "power." A miracle is a demonstration of power above and beyond the natural. It is supernatural only as man regards it. Nothing is supernatural to God. Nothing is a miracle to one who is omnipotent.**

A miracle may be a sign from the standpoint of design. It is designed to act as a miraculous testimony in behalf of truth. At the same time, it may be a "wonder" because of its effect, since it excites wonder and amazement in the heart of the beholder. It is a miracle because of its origin, being a demonstration of supernatural or extraordinary power. Gifts of the Holy Spirit relate to the Christian aspect of the manifestation of power.

In the passage under consideration, the word for "gifts" is not *charismata.* **This word is used elsewhere, and refers to "gifts of grace," as the word itself indicates. But here it is** *merismos,* **literally meaning "parting" or "divining." It is used only twice in the New Covenant Scriptures, both times in the letter to the Hebrews. Instead of the expression "gifts of the Spirit," probably we should follow the marginal rendering "distributions of the Spirit." Since the gifts of the Spirit are all distributed by the Spirit, there need be no great excitement over which expression is used.**

The signs, wonders, gifts, and miracles were the divine

attestation to the veracity of those who were companions of Jesus. They were the ones who heard Him while He was on earth. The signs were God's way of assuring that the message of the witnesses was the same as the message Jesus had personally declared. Once their message was made a matter of historical record, and properly established as accurate by supernatural means, no further signs or miracles were required for rendering it credible. Truth once confirmed never need be confirmed again.

Accordingly, the "signs of an apostle" were never given to any but the apostles. To accredit every citizen as an ambassador would mean that no one was really an ambassador. I think the Spirit selected, and made a matter of record, a sufficient number of miracles, and the very kind of miracles essential to rendering the apostolic testimony capable of belief by an honest heart. To demand additional signs is not to manifest belief, but doubt. It is to walk by sight and not by faith. It is to impeach the apostolic credentials as being insufficient to accomplish the purpose for which God designed them. As far as I am concerned, the gospel was complete, the validation adequate, the credibility established. On that basis I believe it.

The World to Come

Contents

One of the most difficult things in the world is to attempt to project oneself into the lives of those who are the products of a culture other than his own. The understanding of and sympathy for other people depends to a large extent on a person's ability to bridge the chasm of differing circumstances. Almost every missionary family experiences initial culture shock. Sometimes this is so great that it is impossible for them to continue sharing in the strange environment and in the life-style it has generated.

If the establishment of communication is so difficult between those who live at the same time in history, it is infinitely more so when twenty centuries separate them. I seriously doubt that the modern Jew living in a penthouse apartment in New York City can even begin to understand the Jews of Jesus' day. How much less can those of us who are non-Jews develop a "Jewish mind" and share in the ideas, longings, and aspirations of "the circumcised" to whom some of the Biblical letters were addressed.

As much as possible, we must place the letters back in the setting in which the writers and recipients lived. We must try to fathom what the citizens of Thessalonica, a colony of mustered-out soldiers from the army of Augustus Caesar, thought when they read what Paul wrote. We must strive to understand what Timothy understood when the first letter was handed to him in Ephesus. We must ask what flashed through the mind of Titus when he perused his letter on the isle of Crete. That is not easy.

Living words, like living people, are always growing and changing. It is hard to go back even forty years in time and grasp your own feelings as a child.

One of the most difficult tasks of an interpreter of Scripture must be to reproduce the reasoning that guided the Jewish community of two thousand years ago. Today there is a great understanding gap between ourselves and some of our neighbors in the same apartment complex. To many of us, our Jewish friends who ride the same elevator are like people from another continent. When we pick up a newspaper bearing the title *Jewish Light* or *Jewish Star,* even though printed in English, it is filled with words that convey little to us. Most of us never have visited a Reformed Jewish Temple for the first Sabbath service on Friday evening. Hardly any of us ever have been to an Orthodox synagogue.

All of this means that we frequently read the letter to the Hebrews, forgetting to whom it was written and the purpose for which it was written. Thus our comments are sometimes shallow and superficial. Sometimes our applications are so farfetched that they actually do more harm than good.

The letter to the Hebrews grew out of a real life situation. It was written to meet a grave and present emergency. It was an honest attempt to keep Jews, who had accepted Jesus as the Messiah, from regression into Judaism. Because of the Jews' reverence for the prophets, whose writings were solemnly read every week in the synagogue, the writer asserts that the final revelation of God is His Son. Because of their preoccupation with angels, even though some of it was superstitious, the writer affirms that the Son is seven ways better than angels. He then makes a little digression to show the nature of the communication of God "in these last days," exhorting the readers not to neglect it.

Having done this, he reverts at once to his reasoning about

the relative position of angels. "For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak" (2:5). Now, a great many expositors think of "the world to come" as a reference to the state of things after the coming of Jesus in the clouds, the culmination of the present order. Certainly if the letter had been written to us in the twentieth century, that would be a logical conclusion. But it was not written to us. It was written to first-century Palestinian Jews, steeped in all the lore and tradition of the Jewish thinking of that time.

The expression, "the world to come," had a special significance in that thinking. The Jews had developed a complex explanation for the state and fate of the world. So elaborate was it that time would fail us to detail it. There were many and varied versions so that, to the uninitiated looking back upon it, there seemed to be much confusion. Yet there was an optimistic thread running through all of the ramifications growing out of the discussions of the rabbis. This brought hope to the persecuted and disconsolate masses, who were downtrodden and often exiled by cruel conquerors.

TIME IN TWO

The general opinion was that time would be divided into two periods. One period was "this present evil world," called *Olam hazzeh.* **It was to be a period in which the people of God must patiently endure every form of insult and indignity at he hands of those who knew not God. Families had to suffer being broken up. Individuals had to accept cursing and reviling. The sacred rites by which reverence was manifested would be interrupted by cruel and foul-mouthed heathen militarists. But all of this was to be temporary. It was but a preparation for a brighter time when Israel would triumph, and all of her foes would be trampled underfoot.**

The advent of the Messiah would usher in a "golden age."

His coming would be "the day of the Lord," or "the great day." The prophets had freely predicted it. Joel had written about "the day of the Lord . . . in the valley of decision" (3:14). That day would be ushered in with the blowing of a great trumpet. Natural phenomena would be a sign to the heathen. The sun would be darkened, the moon would turn to blood, and the stars would refuse to shine. The Messiah would be the hope of His people.

According to the Midrash, all circumcised Israel would be released from Gehenna. The Jews in Palestine would be raised from the dead, while those of Israel who had been buried elsewhere would have to roll under the ground until they reached the holy soil, whereupon they would also come forth. Jehovah would establish His kingdom upon the earth. Jerusalem would be the capital of the world. The law of the Lord would issue forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. The Messiah would sit upon the throne of David. Peace would settle over the earth for a thousand years. Every tree would bear an abundance of fruit, and every man would sit under the shadow of his own vine and fig tree.

During the thousand-year reign, the representatives of all nations would come to Jerusalem. Presents and tribute would be brought in honor of the majesty of the King. Commerce would flow unhampered through the world, with customs due and cheerfully remitted to the great King. Ten men, speaking varied languages would take hold of the garment of Jesus walking down the street and say, "We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you" (Zechariah 8:23).

In contrast with the time of hardship then being endured, this golden age was referred to as *Olam habba,* **"the world to come." Ushered in by "the great day of the Lord," it would be a time when God would visit His people and punish His enemies. It was to be a "day of visitation." Woven into the mental picture was a great deal of fantasy, and the concept of the Messiah was**

shaped by a considerable amount of mythical speculation. But He was to be a world conqueror, treading the winepress of God's wrath, trampling His enemies underfoot. He would rule until the last enemy was destroyed, and universal tranquillity bathed the earth, through the intervention of the God of Israel.

Jesus did not fit the image conjured up by the rabbis. His claim to be the Son of God seemed like blasphemy. His disavowal of Jerusalem as the place where men would worship the Father seemed a denial of what the prophets had spoken about all nations flowing into the holy city. His utter selflessness and lack of political ambition were incongruous for a world conqueror. The Jewish masses were not concerned about throwing off the yoke of sin as they were about ridding themselves of the yoke of the Caesars. It seemed no real loss, therefore, when Jesus perished on a Roman cross.

THE TIME HAS COME

Now, the writer to the Hebrews had the task of convincing these Jews that "the age to come" had come. The Roman army still policed the world. Jerusalem was still an occupied city, but the kingdom of Heaven was a reality. The Messiah had been rejected when He came to His own. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." They had consented to His death, but He had risen from the dead. He was even now seated at the right hand of God. All authority had been given to Him in Heaven and on earth. The "present evil world" was doomed. The Messianic reign was a reality. It was invisible, but would be made visible by His revelation.

The world is not under the angels. They do not have lordship or dominion. So the writer could say, "For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak" (Hebrews 2:5). Then he interjects a quotation, and this has caused some consternation among commentators. Many

agree with William Barclay that it is "by no means an easy passage of which to grasp the meaning." The author of the letter was addressing men who were familiar with the Scriptures of old. He did not consider it necessary to identify the source of the quotation, either as to author or place. His readers would immediately recognize both. Here is the quotation as he gave it:

> **"But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (2:6-9).**

The one who testified was David. The "certain place" in which his testimony was given was Psalm 8:4-6. I do not regard this as a Messianic psalm. It is clear from reading it that the writer was talking about man as created by God. He was asking what there was about man to attract the attention or merit the visitation of God. The term "son of man" has no reference to Jesus, and would not have been so understood by David. It refers to the posterity or offspring of man, and throughout the Old Covenant Scriptures it is used as another term for man.

David answers his own questions addressed to God. The thing about man and his progeny that established a basis for divine interest was his nature. Man was created by God. He was given priority over all other material creation. He was made but slightly inferior to angels. He was invested with glory and honor not accorded any other creature. God set man over all the works of His hands. Whatever else was made was made for man's honor as well as God's. The flowers that bloomed, the trees

bearing fruit, the birds of the air, the fish of the sea, the planets in their orbits, all were for man's enjoyment and benefit.

In one grand sweep of language the writer declares, "Thou has put all things in subjection under his feet." Every word of this sentence is dynamic. The entire system is by divine arrangement. The order of creation leads in a stately parade to the coming of man, and when the time of his advent arrived, his kingdom was ready and awaiting his sovereignty. Made of the dust of the ground, he still bore the image of God. He came forth from the lowly elements to become lord of all he surveyed. It was all by heavenly design.

It was not necessary for man to conquer his kingdom in order to rule over it. It was his by divine fiat. "Thou hast put"! God ordained it. Man's dominion was universal. All things were under his feet. There would be no doubt about the scope of it, for the statement is subjoined, "For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him."

That was the ideal of God's purpose. It was the design of the infinite mind. But often there is a great gap between the ideal and stark reality. It was so in this case. In making man after the divine image, God gave him a will. His will is the determinant factor. The will enables one to make a choice. This was a magnificent risk, for God knew that man could choose to reject God's will. Man could say to God. "Not Thy will, but mine be done." And it happened! So the writer has to say, rather sadly we surmise, "But now we see not yet all things put under him." Alienation from God brought enemies not yet conquered. Man became a victim rather than a victor. He became a subject rather than a lord.

HOPE IN GOD

Yet there is hope! That hope lies with God, not with man. God did not hate man, but loved him. He continued to love him,

even after he shattered the eternal ideal. We must notice that there are two sentences introduced with the word "but," and both are significant. The first is a statement of failure, the second a statement of faith. One has to do with human helplessness, the other with divine hopefulness. "But now we see not yet all things put under him . . . But we see Jesus." The "not yet" will find its fulfillment in Jesus. We go from the primal purpose to the rugged reality, and on to the divine recovery. All that we lost through sin in Adam we will regain through salvation in Jesus.

It is significant that the name "Jesus" appears here for the first time in the letter. The Hebrews would associate it immediately with salvation, for that is what the word means. It is almost as if, after painting the dark picture of man's failure, the writer says, "But we see salvation." That salvation is not a scheme, a code, a program, or a compilation of precepts. It is a Person who will make it possible for us to erase the realm of the "not yet," which frustrates and defeats us. The one who does not "see Jesus," who ignores or denies Him, or who forsakes Him to return to an inferior state, is forfeiting all hope of realizing God's purpose for man. Such a person never can be whole. He will always be shattered.

In the seventh verse it was affirmed that man was made a little lower than the angels. In the ninth verse it is affirmed that Jesus was made a little lower than the angels. Nothing else could quite so fully depict Jesus' sharing the lot of man. The route to glory, since the primal sin of man, is the road of suffering. Once man was ruler of the created universe in undisturbed bliss. There was no pain and no anguish. No tear flowed down his cheek. But with the coming of sin came also suffering and distress. Now Jesus shared our suffering to regain the glory that He surrendered, making it possible for us to share His glory by sharing His suffering.

God's grace became manifest because of man's involvement with sin. That grace knew no limitation. It was by

His grace that the Son tasted death for every man. The word "taste" means "experience personally," or "become directly involved." Jesus took our burden. He assumed the load of our guilt. When we see Jesus, we see a sin-bearer, a deliverer! We can now become conquerors in Him. His righteousness regains for us what our own unrighteousness lost in Adam.

The Problem of Suffering

Contents

There are a great many questions that believers in Jesus must face. There are no easy answers to some of these. They shatter our smugness and serve to stifle our pride. In some cases we must live with the fact that the replies we give are not wholly satisfactory to ourselves. We cannot be surprised when others feel that our answers are inadequate. One problem in this category is that of human suffering, prevalent in a universe created by a loving God.

All of us know the questions beginning with "why." They usually are preceded by others. Is not God all-powerful? Is He not all-wise? If He is, does He not know a means for removing human suffering? If He is omnipotent, why does He not end it? Can a loving God look upon such suffering and not be moved? Philosophers have pondered these matters, believers have striven for a meaningful solution, and unbelievers have employed them as goads.

Why do seemingly good people die of cancer? Why is it that a saint, en route to performing an act of mercy in the name of the Lord, may be crippled for life in an automobile accident? Why does it happen that a powerful proclaimer of the gospel is turned into a helpless specimen by a sudden stroke of paralysis? There are no glib answers to these recurring questions. Often we are haunted by the hollowness of our own replies. In the final analysis, we are driven back upon sheer faith, and faith alone can make it possible for us to hang on in an area where

knowledge takes us to the edge of the precipice and then deserts us.

We must recognize, however, that even though we cannot give a complete and satisfying answer, this does not mean that we cannot give an answer at all. Just because one cannot explain *everything* **does not argue he cannot explain** *anything.* **It is a conviction of mine that in the letter to the Hebrews we are given information about three benefits that accrue from suffering, and these never would become ours if we did not know suffering. While one hesitates to speak of "benefits" and "suffering" in the same breath, this only points up another of the paradoxes with which the Bible teems. It is interesting that all three of these are directly connected with the sufferings of Jesus. That they also have a relationship to ourselves is evident by a statement in 1 Peter 2:21; "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps."**

1. *By suffering we are qualified to fulfill the role to which God has called us.* **This was true of Jesus: "For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings" (Hebrews 2:10). Even though He was the Creator of everything, and all things were made for Him, He still could not qualify for the task as the captain of salvation except by suffering. The word "perfect" is not used here in a moral or ethical sense, although Jesus was without sin. There was no flaw in His character. As used here, perfection has to do with the nature of His function in bringing sons of God to glory.**

Jesus was fully qualified to be the Savior of men only by suffering as a man. Suffering is the natural consequence of the kind of world that sin created. When man abdicated his moral sovereignty over God's creation, he became an heir of suffering. We should not be surprised at suffering in this kind of world. We should expect it. Our attitude should not be one of denial of

its reality, like the Christian scientists, nor of abject complaint against God for allowing it. The world in which we live is not as God made it originally, but as man made it aboriginally. Our task is to determine how we can employ our suffering to develop the kind of character that will ultimately triumph over it. We must master it, not allow it to master us, or to make us its slaves.

The Spirit speaks about suffering as a test of our patience and endurance. We are like gold tried in the fire. Gold is not destroyed by flame. It is purified. Fire consumes the dross, and thus purges the precious metal. The apostle Peter makes it quite clear that saints should not think of fiery trials "as though some strange thing happened unto you" (1 Peter 4:12). The intimation of his epistles is that Jesus' followers have been called to suffer. He says, "Rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."

2. *We learn obedience by the things we suffer.* **It was said of Jesus, "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered" (Hebrews 5:8). It is obvious that it is easier to apply this to ourselves than to Jesus. One who studies the expression in any great depth will soon become aware of how the commentators have wrestled with it. It is not my purpose to deal with all of the details. I can better serve my own cause by expressing what I think it means and does not mean.**

It certainly does not mean that Jesus did not know what obedience meant. His very advent into our world was an act of supreme obedience to the will of His Father. In fact, under very trying circumstances He asserted that He was not deserted by the Father, nor abandoned. He offered as His reason for saying so that He unvaryingly did the Father's will: "He that hath sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him" (John 8:29).

We can hardly assume that Jesus was reluctant to obey the

Father until suffering brought Him into line, nor can we suppose that He was tempted to resist and refuse until humbled by suffering. Laying aside all of these as intolerable, it seems to me that even though He was the Son of God, He was willing to become like ourselves and to submit to suffering, as a means of encouraging obedience. Jesus wanted to understand my nature to such an extent that He willingly subjected himself to my lot in order to see how I must learn.

All of us are quite aware that we learn obedience through suffering. We learn it in many ways. The person who breaks the speed limit and wrecks his automobile, crawls out of the mess with realization that his bruised and battered body must pay for his indiscretion. One who extends his credit obligations beyond his ability to pay, and then loses his job, lies awake at night suffering remorse because of his lack of control. Even little children must be required to pay the penalty for failing to behave and to obey. There are some things we apparently refuse to accept or admit until personal suffering enforces them upon us. Henry Ward Beecher said, "God washes the eyes by tears until they can behold the invisible land where tears shall come no more."

3. *We learn compassion for others who suffer by our own endurance of suffering.* **It is possible that prolonged and acute suffering by its very nature can create a state of loneliness for the sufferer. This may result from one of two things. The sufferer may feel that he has become a handicap to others, and suspect that they avoid him because he cannot relate to them normally, or the sufferer may withdraw into a shell because he is unable to maintain social contacts to the full. In either case the ostracism only increases the problem by adding that of emotion to the physical, and the sufferer feels entirely forsaken.**

It is here that the real believer who has a relationship with Jesus can triumph over self and gain the victory over his negative feelings. A consciousness of the nearness of Jesus

enables him to recognize that he is not alone. He can be assured of a compassionate and understanding Friend who will not desert him, regardless of how rough the going is. There are two passages to be recalled when waves of self-pity sweep over the soul and fear of desertion sets in. One declares that Jesus was made like His brethren so that He could be both merciful and faithful as a high priest. The declaration closes with a sentence filled with assurance: "For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted" (2:18).

When we are in trouble we instinctively turn for help to someone else who has been through the same turmoil. There is little doubt that this is the basis for the high degree of success achieved by Alcoholics Anonymous. Because of one's inability to cope with life without intoxicants, the victim of drink can be sure of being understood by those who are "in the same boat." The simple approach to an agonizing problem has paid off, because it brings one into a fellowship of understanding, created by similar experience.

I have conducted a number of forums and seminars with high school students who have been experimenting with drugs, and have been grateful for their response. I am instantly aware that there is a wall between us, however, because I have never smoked pot, skin-popped, or mainlined. I cannot talk from a mutually experiential level with them. The difference is quite noticeable when I take someone with me whom I have salvaged after a "bad trip." Even though a former "pothead" or "pill freak" may not be an eloquent speaker, he commands attention because he knows what he is talking about. When he says that Jesus is the answer, his youthful hearers listen to the answer, because they realize a "veteran" knows the problem firsthand.

I know a woman of about forty who lost her husband as the result of an accident. His life was taken in its very prime, at a time when he and his wife were planning glorious things for the future. Some of their dreams were just beginning to reach

fruition when death intervened and dashed all plans into oblivion. The wife went through a period of deep depression. There were times when she doubted the existence of God. There were moments of hysteria. She even contemplated suicide, and hated herself for doing so. In one of her blackest moments of despair, she was visited by another woman whose husband had died of a heart attack when she was only twenty-seven years of age. She was left a widow with three small children to rear. In a soft voice she told the other woman of sleepless nights and tear-filled days. She also told her that never once had she lost faith that God would see her through. Every night she prayed herself to sleep, and soon a healing balm was applied to her heart. She had suffered much more than the one who had recently lost her husband, so her very presence radiating calm faith made a difference. Something like this comes through to us when we turn to Jesus in our suffering.

The other passage to which I alluded is Hebrews 4:15, 16: "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

I am thinking of a social worker who was given a special award of recognition because of her efficiency in processing cases of the indigent and poverty-stricken. Day after day she sits at her desk listening to tales of human woe. From early morning until closing time the paper forms she has filled out pile up on her desk. She deals directly with wretchedness, hunger, disease, and despair. She must try to sort out the truth from the lies, and determine what is valid and what is not. One night I asked her how she could appear so cheerful and charming after a long day at her desk. Her reply was, "I never really become involved with persons. To me each one is a client. I see him as an index card or a form for filing in a metal cabinet. He is a number on the computer. This allows me to keep my sanity."

One time I was staying in the home of a prominent physician and surgeon. At breakfast one morning, he suggested that when he left the office in the evening he would take me to dinner at a gourmet restaurant we had been wanting to visit. He ventured the opinion that he would be ready for relaxation because of a particularly trying surgical technique he would have to employ that day. When he drove home to pick me up, I asked him about his day. His patient had died without regaining consciousness, and a little boy for whom he had performed brain surgery a few days before also expired while his father and mother watched him breathe his last.

I was curious to know how this affected an eminently skilled surgeon, and I ventured to ask. He did not shut me up but began to talk. He said, "No human being like myself can ever be unaffected by disease or death. We are too close to it to ignore it. I think about every patient, but I suspect I think of him as a case, challenging my powers of diagnosis and my knowledge of how to prescribe. In advance I go over all I have ever learned in school and in refresher courses. Then I determine the steps I shall take. But I do not become emotionally involved. Perhaps I deal with cases, not with persons. I wonder about my own attitude sometimes."

I think it is precisely at this point that Jesus differs in His ministration to our needs. I have a real conviction that He never regards me as a number fed into a computer. When I file my federal income tax return, it contains my Social Security number. The data I supply is fed into the maw of that giant electronic device under that number. The computer knows nothing about me. It has no consciousness of how hard I have labored for my income. It knows nothing of what I would like to do with the money I must pay as a tax to the government. It is cold, indifferent, calculating, and mechanical. It does not care who I am, what I am, or where I am going. But I am not a number to Jesus. He knows me. He does not need a printout for identification.

My personal physician is a wonderful man. I have a great deal of confidence in him, but he has hundreds of patients, and he cannot possibly remember them all. When I go to him for a checkup, one of his nurses calls my name from her appointment chart and conducts me to a little cubicle containing a desk and an examination table. She tells me the doctor will be in to see me soon. After she closes the door, she puts my chart in a spring clip on the outside. Although I cannot see through the door, I know the doctor comes and takes my chart, reads my name, and quickly glances at his findings and recommendations of the last time. Then he comes in, cheerful and smiling, extending his hand and saying, "Well, well, Mr. Ketcherside, it's nice to see you again! How are you feeling?" I've been tempted to switch the name on the front page of my chart to see if he would come in and say, "Well, well, Mr. Wyzinski! It is nice to see you again. And how is Mrs. Wyzinski?"

Jesus needs no such chart. He said that the good shepherd "calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out" (John 10:3). When I come to Jesus in time of need, He never asks, "Who is speaking, please?" He never says, "I am sorry, but I just can't place you. I don't recall your name." Jesus knows me, inside and out. Jesus is involved with me, with all my feelings and motives. He has no office hours. He does not take Thursdays off to play golf.

I confess that it really touches me when I read that our High Priest can be touched with our infirmities. He knows them all. There is not a temptation I have had to wrestle with that He did not experience. We make a mistake when we dream about Jesus and conclude that He was so holy there were some things Satan did not dare throw at Him. Satan scraped the bottom of the temptation barrel. He unloaded his whole arsenal, trying Him with every problem to which flesh is the unfortunate heir. He kept nothing back, but Jesus waded through the muck of earth's garbage dump unsullied. Did you ever weigh the force of that little word "yet" in the statement "yet without sin"?

All of this should encourage boldness in approaching the throne of grace. I once knew a group of young people who were given an invitation to come to the White House to present to the President a book of history compiled by the class. When they tried to choose someone to present the little speech in front of the television cameras, the class president refused the assignment. He declared that he was too timid and forgetful. He said, "I haven't got the nerve to tackle it!" Let me tell you that, even though the Lord of the universe occupies the throne of mercy, I am not frightened to approach Him. I've got the nerve to tackle it!

There are two things we all need in the moral universe. One is mercy. We cannot make it on merit for two reasons. First, the divine arrangement is not set up on that basis. Second, even if it were, none of us could hit the mark. Our human nature never could generate enough merit to qualify. Therefore, divine mercy is an absolute essential.

The second thing we need is grace to help in time of need. There is no such thing as a life on earth without knowing a need. Some do not recognize their need, but this is no proof that the need is not there. Need represents a lack of anything requisite. We often require forgiveness and forbearance. There are times of want, poverty, and distress. But regardless of the nature of our exigency, we can approach the throne, knowing that God has said, "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out."

GOD'S PIONEER

Having explored with you some of the good things that can arise from adversity when it is consigned to God's hand, I should like to turn our attention back to the term "captain of salvation" in Hebrews 2:10. The objective of Jesus is stated as "bringing many sons unto glory." In order to accomplish this, it is argued that it was appropriate and fitting for Him to perfect

himself to the task by suffering. To do this He identified himself with our lot. He partook of our state. He did it all as the captain of the salvation of those for whom He suffered.

A study of the original language in this phrase leads to the conclusion that the word "captain" is hardly an adequate rendering. It does not convey to the modern man the import of the Greek word *archegos.* **The word occurs four times in the Greek text, and in every instance it is applied to Jesus. In Acts 3:15 He is called "the Prince of life." In Acts 5:31 He is called "a Prince and a Savior." In Hebrews 12:2 He is called "the author" of our faith. The word was not easy for the translators to capture in English, as is evident from the variety of words they use in its stead.**

J. B. Phillips uses the expression, "the source of our faith." *The New English Version* **renders it "upon whom faith depends from start to finish."** *Today's English Version* **gives much the same reading. The** *Revised Standard Version* **reads "the pioneer of our faith."** *The Twentieth Century New Testament* **employs the term "Guide." We do not ordinarily think of a captain as being either a source, guide, or pioneer.**

The fact is that *archegos* **was used by the Greeks in every one of these senses. The translators had to make a selection that they considered to be most apt to convey the thought the writer wished to express to the Hebrews. As the first part of the word suggests, it has the basic meaning of chief, leader, or head. It was used for a captain of an army, or for a political leader of a province. Since "prince" designates one who rules over a principality, it is easy to see why the translators twice adopted it to describe the relationship of Jesus to the domain of salvation or faith. But the word also means a "founder" or "originator." One who founded a school of philosophy was called an** *archegos.* **One who planted a new colony or established a new city was also given this designation.**

Whatever was under consideration at the time, there was always one thought running like a thread through every usage. The word signified "one who took the lead," with the view that others would be following and participating in the project. No one builds a city for his own exclusive occupancy. No one founds a school with the prospect that he will be the only student. No one begins a colony on the hope that he will be the only resident. Indeed, if this were the case there would be no city, school, or colony. There was always the expectancy that others would march in the footsteps of the leader.

It is because of this I experienced a real thrill when I first read the *Revised Standard Version* **and found that the translators had selected the word "pioneer" unanimously in Hebrews 2:10 and 12:2. There is something about the very idea of a pioneer that describes what Jesus is to me. Our English word wends its way backward to the Latin** *pedis,* **"foot," and a** *peon* **is one who goes on foot, especially a foot soldier. So a pioneer was an explorer, one who went ahead and prepared the way for those who would follow.**

As a lad I can remember my grandfather showing me the marks on huge trees, placed there by hardy timber explorers who thus blazed a route for others. I can also recall his stories of those who became lost, and in their circuitous wanderings stumbled upon a tree which had been blazed by an ax. They now realized that they were on the road to shelter and safety. Jesus is my trailblazer. He came into the tangled forest of life and plunged into the wilderness, marking the way for me. He placed danger signs, built bridges, removed obstacles, and led right on through the dark valley of the shadow. Ever since the day I made a firm resolution to follow in His steps, I have been looking for the marks along the trail. It gives me a little of the thrill of an explorer to pick my way through the undergrowth of sin and temptation, and think about the future goal where I know He is waiting.

It is my good fortune to live but a few minutes' drive from the winter quarters where Meriwether Lewis and William Clark began their expedition on May 14, 1804. Their adventure is regarded as one of the great facts of exploration. The men traveled 8,500 miles. Much of the route lay through unknown territory inhabited by Indians who had never before seen a white man. The leaders kept a diary, drew maps, and charted the route. A few years ago another band of men covered the same trail. They had no trouble finding the route. I am glad that the Spirit commissioned some of the companions of Jesus to make a record of His earthly trek. I no more confuse the Bible with Jesus than it would confuse an explorer's record book with Lewis and Clark. Jesus is the way-shower, the road builder, God's engineer. I am happy to be part of the continuous expedition, which will cease only when we see the Great Explorer.

BROTHERHOOD

A particularly significant passage occurs at Hebrews 2:11-13. I shall never forget when its implication first struck me. It opened up a great new vista of thought. It is one of the interesting things connected with reading the Bible that, just when you think you have exhausted the meaning of a verse, in a brilliant flash you envision details that you never thought of before. When I was little, I had an uncle who took delight in teasing us. He would have a pocket full of shiny new pennies, and at an opportune time would ask me to hold out my hand. He would drop a penny into my palm. When I would start to withdraw my hand, he would drop another. He continued this with agonizing waits between each piece of newly acquired wealth, until finally he said, "That's it." Then, as I turned away to count my little hoard he would suddenly say, "Wait a minute," and then start over.

God is not a tease! But He does not drop His inestimable

riches upon us in one great heap. He releases the treasure to us bit by bit, "Here a little, there a little," as the prophet quaintly described it. I have learned never to close my mind, and never to turn away, assuming that it is all over. I am convinced that the Holy Spirit is not furnishing new revelation, but He gives us deeper insights, and they are not all "pennies from Heaven." Some are of transcendent value. Let us look at the verses that have sparked these comments, and then I will tell you why they mean so much to me.

> **"For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me."**

It is Jesus who sanctifies, who consecrates and sets us apart to the service of God. The sanctified ones are those who are in Jesus, those who have been purchased by His blood. It is here affirmed that both Jesus and His saints are all of one. It is obvious that there is an ellipsis here. A word must be supplied, if we would complete the thought. William Barclay says they are all of the "same stock." Albert Barnes suggests that other words, such as family, spirit, Father, or nature, would suit the connection, and that some such word must be understood. Robert Milligan thinks that "one Father" is correct, saying, that it "seems to accord best with all the terms and conditions of the context."

If Jesus is not ashamed to recognize as brethren those who have the same Father as himself, we should not be ashamed to do so either. Brotherhood is not based upon equality of knowledge, for then Jesus could not regard us as brethren. It is not based upon the degree of doctrinal comprehension, intellectual attainment, or orthodox understanding. *Brotherhood is based upon a common Fatherhood.* **Fellowship results from a**

mutual sonship. We are brothers, not because we have the same ideas, but because we have the same Father. No one truly follows Jesus who refuses to call all those his brethren who have the same Father as himself.

The writer is addressing Jews. It is not surprising that he would validate what he says by quotations from the Old Covenant Scriptures, drawing upon both the psalms and the prophets. The principle he enunciates is universal, and I am blessed by the thought that I need not choose my brethren. All I need to do is accept those whom the Father has accepted. Wherever He has a child, there I have a brother or sister. It is just that simple, and I intend never to confuse or confound it!

The Great Liberator

Contents

We come now to the final night of our sharing meetings. I am deeply indebted to you for your invitation to address you. I am just as thankful to those who have influenced my life in the past and lighted within my heart the fire of appreciation for the Bible. I can truthfully say the flame grows brighter with each passing day. Occasions such as these we have enjoyed heap the kindling of your own interest upon the conflagration, to make an even more intense glow.

Although you asked me to address you on the letter to the Hebrews, I have limited myself to the first two chapters. I have done so purposely, for two reasons. I felt it better to take a concentrated look at a small scope of territory, than to make a sweeping view of a larger panorama with but a few details filled in. Also, my intent was to demonstrate how thoroughly the testimony to Jesus saturates the letter. The Son is the center and circumference of God's revelation. All that God has revealed revolves around Him, like satellites around our sun.

I am constantly amazed at how my own thinking about Jesus has changed, and my love for Him has grown deeper. I cannot remember the time when I did not know about Jesus. My first knowledge of Him undoubtedly came from the gentle lullabies softly sung by my Danish mother, as she rocked me to sleep. Steeped in the lore of the German Lutheran heritage in which she was reared, her life was one of awe and reverence for the babe of Bethlehem. I drew from her that same warm feeling

just as I imbibed the warm life-sustaining milk from her breasts.

My first childish books were about Jesus. They told me but little about His childhood, for little has been recorded. But my own vivid imagination filled out the gaps and supplied what was lacking. By the time I was ready for high school, I knew all of the facts about Jesus. I could recite them glibly and give the details set forth in the sacred Scriptures. It was years later that I came to know Jesus in the real and personal sense, which He defines as eternal life. This was a wholly new dimension of knowledge, a blending of two personalities in an intimacy resulting in one spirit, a joining of the human and the divine, until eternal life became the possession of the human.

Jesus is real! He is real in my life! In some ways He is the only thing that is real. If the real is imperishable and unfading, if it represents existence that is independent and actual, then Jesus is all I have that is real. Without Him I can do nothing! Without Him I would be nothing! I think Paul must have felt that way when he wrote, "It is not I that liveth, but Christ that liveth in me!"

I can sympathize with the Palestinian Jews of the first century. The very air they breathed was full of expectancy. Their prophets had foretold the coming of the Messiah and had pointed to their very day as "the fulness of the times." The proclamation of the facts about Jesus of Nazareth seemed to measure up to every criterion they had been taught. Thousands of them accepted Him, turning away from their sins and being baptized in His name. But He was no longer upon earth. Things went on as before. The soldiers of an occupying foreign force still tramped the streets. The cries for divine intervention seemed to go unheeded.

The temptation to renounce the faith and return to the pageantry of the temple was almost overpowering. The longing to see a visible sacrifice for sins was always present. Every feast

day brought a tug to the Jewish heart, every facet of life from birth to death was a fresh reminder of tradition hallowed by long usage.

The writer of the letter to the Hebrews knew the grave danger involved in defecting from the faith. The words of Jesus predicting the utter destruction of Jerusalem were still fresh in his memory. Those who reverted to the law, with its blood of bulls and goats, must deny the efficacy of the atonement of the cross. They would tread underfoot the Son of God. They would count the sanctifying blood of the covenant an unholy thing. For all of them there could be only a fearful anticipation of judgment upon the profligate nation, accompanied by a fiery indignation that would destroy the adversaries.

Ominous signs were everywhere observable. All of the portents mentioned by Jesus as indicative that the time was near were manifest. The letter to the Hebrews was a shout of warning. It was God's warning of the approach of the enemy. It was a storm warning, a tornado alert, the cry of the watchman on the walls. It pointed the way to the only emergency shelter available in the hour of disaster. That shelter was a Person. It was time to remember the words of the psalmist-prophet, "From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed. Lead me to the rock that is higher than I; for thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy. I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings" (Psalm 61:2-4). Note those words, *Thou hast been a shelter for me!*

In this final sharing period, I shall limit myself to a discussion of the last five verses of the second chapter of Hebrews. As a summary of the teaching in the letter, W. E. Vine chose three words as a chTitle for his commentary. They are "Christ All Excelling." He refers to the letter as "the great antidote" against defeat and defection. William Barclay lectured on the letter to the Hebrews to students in the University of

Glasgow for seven years, before he wrote his commentary upon it. In summarizing the attitude of the writer he says, "He found in Christ the one person who could take him into the very presence of God."

That is good, but Hebrews 2:14, 15, reveals Jesus as the one person who could bring God into the very presence of man. It is fairly apparent to anyone who really thinks, that there are some things in the world that man was utterly incapable of doing. No one man could do them, and all men put together could not do them. There had to be help from outside a realm that was rendered helpless by the curse imposed upon it. No one caught up in the sin-cycle could free us from the effect of sin. No one who had fallen short himself could lift us up to the glory of God. I think it is also reasonable to expect the benefactor to adopt the kind of "space suit" we must wear, to live the same kind of environment in which we "live, and move, and have our being."

If He expected us to identify with Him, it would appear that He would have to identify with us. Since we move about in a suit of flesh and blood, bones and tissues, He should don that same kind of suit if He wants to live among us. It must not be a sham either. No one should be tricked into thinking He was flesh and blood, if He really was some kind of spiritual being putting on an act.

Our benefactor would need to experience cold to make Him shiver. He would need to know heat to draw sweat from His pores. He would need to become hungry, thirsty, tired, and weak. When His friends died He would have to know the pang of loss. When people were oppressed He would need to feel within His sensitive spirit the same lash that fell upon their quivering flesh. I think He would need to know He was going to die, which is actually worse than death itself, for anticipation always is more joyous or dreadful than the momentary act of realization.

Someone coined the expression "Big D" for Dallas, Texas. I suspect they did so to describe the growth, the indomitable spirit, and the increasing influence of this burgeoning metropolis. I think there were two "Big D's" in the catalog of enemies before which man in his own strength stood helpless: the Devil and Death. We could not overpower the devil because he had something in each of us. The sting of sin, the venom of transgression had been injected. He knew the string to pull to make us dance like puppets. Someone had to confront him who could say, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me" (John 14:30).

We could not overcome death because we always died before we finished the task. When death moved in, it took no thought of our desires and wishes. It allowed not another minute to complete things only half done. The older we became and the longer we lived, the more we realized that the confrontation had to come. There was no use of either pleading or arguing with death. Death always had the final word. It was the "great silencer."

It is interesting that in just one sentence the writer to the Hebrews shows how Jesus disposed of these two brigands. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them, who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Hebrews 2:14, 15).

It is easy to overlook the importance of some of the words in this statement. As an example, let me mention "forasmuch" and "likewise." These terms found in the King James Version are good old Anglo-Saxon words. The first is actually a combination of three little words meaning "in view of." It is generally rendered "since." "Likewise" is from the Greek word *paraplesios,* **which means "in exactly the same way." The two**

words sustain a comparative relationship. Whatever is implied in the first is included in the second, and to the same degree. If you can determine the meaning of the first, you have ascertained the meaning of the second.

The children were human. They shared a life of flesh and blood. They existed in physical bodies. They lived in tabernacles of physical tissue. So Jesus moved into exactly the same kind of dwelling. "The word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). He did not share our fate, for there is no such thing as fate. That is a pagan concept. He shared our lot. He participated in our portion. I like the expression "the same." Jesus identified with us fully.

Jesus shared in flesh and blood so He could use death as a weapon. The devil wielded death as an instrument of human mental torture. It represented the ultimate in his arsenal, the effect of sin, the great failure to measure up. It was the constant reminder of man's abject surrender, loss of sovereignty, and subsequent humiliation and degradation. Jesus stripped himself of His divine armor and stormed the fort in flesh and blood, submitting to death so He could wrench the sophisticated weapon from the hand of the fiend, and use it to destroy the last vestige of his boasted control.

DELIVERANCE

By the conquest of death through His resurrection, Jesus delivered those who were enslaved to sin. He likewise delivered them from fear.

"Deliver" is a word derived from *apallasso,* **and it is a word of great power and comfort. It was used to describe what happened upon the arrival of a rescuing force, such as when a city was under siege and the enemy was driven away, so the frightened inhabitants could reopen the gates and rejoice in their restored freedom. It was employed to indicate the freeing**

of hostages held for ransom, or the liberation of prisoners taken captive by an invading army. The lives of such prisoners are always in jeopardy. They may be slain in their sleep, or cut down on a march. They exist in constant fear.

I have noticed something of importance when young people who had been enslaved by drugs were being freed, by faith, from their awful clutch. Because many of these could not return to their homes, they established communes in which to live. There they could share in the compassion and understanding of others who had traveled the same road. I visited a number of houses maintained by the "Jesus freaks," as they are called. All of them had the walls, and sometimes the ceilings, papered with Scriptural passages. You could lie in your sleeping bag and look up and read the Word of God. Almost everyone of them had the same large poster prominently displayed. It consisted of a painting of the head of Jesus, and underneath in bold letters: *The Liberator!*

These young people had recaptured a concept of the mission of Jesus, which had been lost by the contemporary world. We had been treated for centuries to displays of "the infant Jesus," featuring a doll lying in a straw-filled manger with an electric spotlight directed upon its rosy cheeks. We had sung hymns about "Gentle Jesus, meek and mild." We had adored pictures with a feminine aura, depicting Jesus with long hair down to his shoulders, and then when our sons began to imitate the hair length shown in the pictures, we gave them the ultimatum, "Go to the barber or get out until you do!"

We had forgotten the carpenter with calloused hands. We had forgotten the homeless hiker who could hit the road all day and then pray all night in the mountains. We were so busy making Jesus conform to our twentieth-century, upper-middle-class image, that we lost sight of what He was really like. When Jesus was murdered at the age of thirty-three, He had to have been a tough-muscled, sunburnt, fearless leader, willing to take

on the last enemy that shall be destroyed. As J. B. Phillips once put it, "In fact there is no connection between what has been rudely called the 'creeping-Jesus' method and the life and character of the real Christ." Jesus has freed me! He has rescued me from bondage! He has liberated me from the great dread, the relentless shadow, the overwhelming fright!

Hebrews 2:16, as the King James Version has it, is confusing. I think the translators, appointed by the king, missed the point. The words they added in an attempt to supply an ellipsis do no injustice to the truth, and it is quite easy to see how they were motivated in their selection. The verse reads, "For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham." I do not think, however, that the point at issue is the adoption of angelic nature as opposed to the nature of Abraham's seed. It appears the writer is dealing with the purpose of Jesus' coming. He did not come to deliver angels. No savior was provided for the angels who sinned. There was no provision for removing the chains of darkness in which they were confined.

Jesus came to deliver the seed of Abraham. It was to Abraham and his seed that the promises were made. Since this letter was written to the Hebrews, it was particularly appropriate to refer to the seed of Abraham and to encourage them to trust in one whose advent in the flesh made Him a descendant of Abraham, and the very seed of blessing.

OUR HIGH PRIEST

Although I have previously alluded to the last two verses of this chapter, I beg your indulgence while I say a little more. So important is their message that they deserve better treatment than I am able to give them. "Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to

God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted," (vv. 17, 18).

For a number of years I taught an annual in-depth study in the Pentateuch, the five books of Moses. I think I can understand the reason why the writer of the letter to the Hebrews spent so much time emphasizing the high priesthood of Jesus. The contrast between the priesthood of Melchizedek and that of Aaron was calculated to do more than almost anything else to point up the immensity of the difference between the covenant of grace and one based upon a written code.

The approach to God in Judaism was made through the high priest. He alone was allowed to don the beautiful robe which was bound around the waist with "the curious girdle" (Leviticus 8:7). Upon his head was placed the miter with the golden crown containing the words, "Holiness to the Lord" (Exodus 39:30). He wore the breastplate with the twelve precious stones engraved with the tribal names. Inside the envelope-like container formed by the breastplate was the Urim and Thummim, two stones, whose designations meant "lights and perfections" and which gave the legitimate bearer perfect light in judgment and revelation.

It was the high priest alone who was permitted to enter the Most Holy Place to make atonement for the people. Only once per year upon the tenth day of the seventh month, the only day that God specifically commanded to be a day of fasting, the high priest took the blood and went behind the second veil into the thick darkness surrounding the mercy seat. Dipping his finger in the blood, he sprinkled it "upon the mercy seat and before the mercy seat."

The high priest was different from those to whom the law of Moses refers as "the common people." His genealogy, function, dress, and service, all served to keep him aloof and

apart. Perhaps this is best impressed upon us by the sacred injunction, "And there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy place" (Leviticus 16:17). The high priest was untouchable.

The end of the priesthood of Levi, and the ushering in of the priesthood of the order of Melchizedek, brought in a completely new arrangement. Jesus was "made like unto his brethren," and He was both a merciful and faithful high priest. Certainly this could not be affirmed of those who presided at the altar when this letter was written. Many of them were guilty of political conspiracy and compromise. They were often greedy, cruel, and malicious. Sometimes they were so oppressive the people abhorred the ritual, and even were reluctant to go to the temple.

Mercy is the result of understanding. One who knows all of the circumstances that make another what he is, who can take into account the privations and sufferings that have formed his character and contributed to his actions, can be merciful to him. Sympathy is literally "feeling with" another, sharing in his sorrow and feeling his loss as if it were your own. Faithfulness is fidelity and trustworthiness. One who is merciful is one with whom you can commune; one who is faithful is one you can trust, upon whom you can depend. I am thrilled that Jesus is a merciful and faithful high priest.

Suffering and succoring! These are the key words of the last verse in Hebrews 2. The last one is a good old term that was generally in vogue in the England of King James' day. It is an interesting word, which literally meant "to run up from under." I suspect it was a nautical term, having to do with a small boat in distress. It was kept from sinking or coming apart by undergirding it to keep the planks from being ripped off. You read of just such action in Acts 27:17. Eventually the word came to refer to lending a helping hand in any time of crisis. Jesus is able to come to our rescue. He can relieve our distress, and the

reason He can do so is that He understands our trials.

The follower of Jesus does not need to give in, give up, or give out! He does not need to be "down and out," because God has made it possible for him to be "up and in." He can substitute gladness for gloom, and smiles for sorrow. No persecution is greater than our Protector. No sin is greater than our Savior. To forsake Jesus is not to go somewhere else. It is to go nowhere. It is to be lost! Jesus is my life, and outside of Him is death!

I want to close these sessions with the benediction that concludes the letter to the Hebrews. I think I have never read anything more beautiful and impressive. Every phrase throbs within my inner being and pulsates in my heart:

> **"Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen" (13:20, 21).**

ADVENTURE OF FAITH

by W. Carl Ketcherside

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ADVENTURE OF FAITH

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For you have been given the privilege of serving Christ, not only by believing in him, but also by suffering for him.

— Philippians 1:29

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Once Upon A Times

Contents

A great many more years ago than I like to think about I was staying in a home where there was a lovely little girl who was not quite three years old. Like most others of her age this little charmer was eager to have someone tell her stories. She was never satisfied but as soon as one was finished she began to plead for another. She never called them stories. Instead, as soon as I entered the house and sat down, she came and crawled upon my lap, adjusted her head against my shoulder, and said, "Now tell me a 'once upon a time.'" When I had obliged her she immediately said, "Don't quit. Tell me another 'once upon a time.'"

It did not take me too long to exhaust my meager fund of fairy tales and after I had run Rumpelstiltskin through the mill a few times and had elaborated upon trolls, brownies, elves, and other little people, until I was tired of them, I decided I would have to devise some stories from life. I hit upon the expediency of taking objects which were in sight and concocting tales about them. I chose for my first candidate a large gray cat which lived a pampered life in the household.

Accordingly, I began, "I know a large gray cat which lies in front of the fireplace dreaming about things he used to do when he was a kitten." Immediately my little audience of one stopped me. "Don't tell that," she said, "I don't want to hear about real things. I want to hear 'once upon a times'!" Perhaps it is because a lot of folk never grew up that they react as did this

little child. We never tire of hearing about David and his sling, Samson and his fiery foxes, or Moses with his snake-swallowing serpent. But a great many apparently think God has run out of power and the divine battery is so depleted it cannot crank us up and get us going in our time.

I never tire of reading the sacred scriptures. Some of the "once upon a times" there are thrilling. And they happened. There are no myths and folk-tales in the Bible. Samson was as real as Charles Atlas. Moses was as real as George Washington. But the God whom I serve did not work Himself into retirement. He has not been laid upon the shelf. Adventure is not something which once was and is no more. The joy, the zest, the thrill of adventure belong to every child of God who is willing to reach out and grasp them.

In his book *The Adventure of Living,* **Dr. Paul Tournier points out that the law of adventure is that one must die in order to be born again. It is difficult for a lot of people to die. They want to hang on to some of the past to be certain of a reference point. They want to rescue an heirloom or carry with them a keepsake. But because they cannot make a complete break with life as it has been they can never fully receive or appreciate those things which "God has prepared for them that love Him."**

In this little volume I would like to accomplish two things. One is to prove that God does not want any of His children to be content with mediocrity. He has designed us to be "more than conquerors through him who loved us." No two of us will be alike and no two of us need to be. But we do need to realize that we were born again to a life of victorious accomplishment, and that we begin with victory over self. We can lift up our eyes to the hills, as the Psalmist put it, and we can demonstrate enthusiasm which literally means to be possessed by God. One who is a God-container cannot keep the contents from showing through.

The other thing I aspire to do is to prove that the spirit of adventure does not need to be a relic of history. There are unexplored frontiers. There are new heights to ascend and new oceans to cross. The mere fact that they are not visible does not mean they are not real. We make a tragic mistake when we equate reality with visibility. Life needs to be lived with a challenge. We need to be constantly on the cutting-edge of destiny. The followers of Jesus can never justify a life of callous indifference. They are to be imitators of God as beloved children. This is the road of high adventure!

Wherever you are as you read this I eagerly pray that it will lead you into a closer walk with God, so that you will realize that wealth we have in "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." And let none of us ever forget that we have this treasure in earthen vessels "to show that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us."

The Need for New Frontiers

Contents

I shall not forget the first time I saw the word *ennui*. At the moment I did not think it was a word. I thought it was a typographical error. But I consulted my trusty Collegiate Dictionary and there it was. That is why I recognized it when I ran across it again recently in a magazine article describing the feelings and attitudes of modern man in our western culture. It is defined as "a feeling of weariness and dissatisfaction; tedium; boredom."

I've noticed another term creeping with recurrent frequency into writings analyzing our reaction to our current situation. It is *satiety*. It seems a little peculiar to find it keeping this kind of company, because it is from a Latin word which meant "satisfaction." When it was adopted into English it meant "complete satisfaction," but words are like the people who use them. They change with advancing age. Now satiety means "an excess of gratification of any desire or need, resulting in wearisomeness or loathing." Modern man is fed up. He is "full up to here." He has had it and still has it! But the anomaly of it is that he is empty, hungry, thirsty and vacuous.

Even the "Now generation" does not like the *Now!* If one is in Junior High, life is *icky*. If he is in Senior High, it is *yucky!* The last term is the way to describe what happens when you poke your finger down your throat and try to vomit. *Yuck!* There is nothing to be gained by trying to sell the kids on the idea that "You never had it so good." The question will be flashed back

immediately, "What's so good about it?" When you start cataloguing the things they have you will be interrupted with a Bronx cheer, or with the curt admonition, "Forget it!" Things simply do not fill the inner void. It is like trying to fill the bottomless pit by dumping garbage into its gaping maw.

What has happened is that we have lost the spirit of adventure somewhere along the way. It was still here when our great-grandparents were alive. If we are old enough, as I certainly am, it had spilled over into the lives of our grandparents. Of course, words like "adventure" are not easily confined when captured by usage, which is what we mean by definition. What is an adventure to one may seem quite humdrum to another. It is quite an adventure to a six-year old boy to visit the Ringling Brothers Circus, but it is no thrill to a lad of the same age whose parents are performers and who was born in a circus wagon. In reality, visiting a circus is not an adventure in the fair sense of the word unless the elephants go on a rampage and knock the tent down, or the lions break out of their cages and clamber up among the spectators.

The idea of risk or jeopardy cannot be eliminated from adventure, and the definition which seems to best suit is "a bold undertaking, in which hazards are to be met and the issue hangs upon unforeseen events." Certainly there are adventurers in our day, but their feats stand out in the morning headlines or the evening telecasts because of their infrequency. The disappearance of the frontier and its absorption by encroaching "civilization" robbed men of the opportunity for a lot of real adventure.

When I was a lad I lived in a small mining village in the Missouri Ozarks. There were aged patriarchs surviving who had made the trip to Texas, across the Oklahoma Territory, in covered wagons. To hear them tell about it was better than reading a book. One could lie on his stomach on the front porch with his chin cupped in his hands, looking up into a wrinkled

face burned brown by exposure to sun and wind and listen by the hour. In imagination he could see the little band gathered about the campfire at dusk, or hear the whirring sound of rattlers or the howling of wolves. No one on the long trek knew what awaited on the morrow.

One of our relatives, designated by everyone who knew him as "Uncle Preston" had enlisted in an earlier day as a buffalo hunter to supply fresh meat daily for a cavalry unit sent out to "tame the Injins" as he expressed it. As he told it, about the only way to tame one who protested the trespass of the white man upon his hunting-grounds was to shoot him. Uncle Preston never trusted an Indian who was alive, and his distrust deepened when a dozen of them came upon him skinning "a buffler." He barely escaped due to his fleet-footed horse, suffering only from wounded pride and "an arrer" through his favorite campaign hat.

Almost every day brought a new sense of adventure to those who lived in log cabins in forest clearings, or in sod shanties on the prairies. Even death was a part of it, and when it came close, the family was gathered about the old four-poster bed for the final word of advice and admonition by the dying one, if he was conscious and able to speak. The hands of loved ones clasped his own until the spirit wrenched itself loose from its clay dwelling, then gently folded the hands of the dead across his chest. Grief was assuaged by the hard work of digging the grave, and burial often took place the same day, or early the next morning, especially in the heat of the summer. There was no evasion and no pretense. Death was a part of the whole scheme of things. It was the final Great Adventure in the flesh, and everyone would share it!

We are not going to recapture those days, nor would we want to do so if we could. The good old days were mostly old. They were not all that good. Our feeble little sporadic attempts to return to them are more laughable than serious. When we

decide to take the family on a camping trip for a week during which we will live in a tent, we want to be sure the park site is equipped with electric lights, showers and toilet facilities. We must not forget the portable refrigerator. The can of bug spray must not be left at home. And even though we may wear a Daniel Boone type shirt with a fringe at the bottom, and a hat with a Davy Crockett insignia on it, we are not frontiersmen. We prove it when we arrive home by hurrying into the house to turn on the central air-conditioning unit!

But what must not be overlooked is that man was not created for a life of ease and softness. He is a creative being and he needs the motivation of challenge if he is to mature. He must resist elements, overcome opposition and face threats. He must lay his life on the line, risk his future, and measure up to the requirements of the hour. When he lives in a world where everything moves along with a precision dictated by others, both that world and himself disintegrates and falls apart. The individual who knows no tension and shares in no adventure becomes more like a domesticated animal than a man made in the image of God. He feeds, sleeps, breeds, and dies, and the world soon forgets he was in it.

There will be little argument about the tendency toward dehumanization in the kind of culture to which we are subjected. The coming of the Industrial Age which first produced its sweat-shops, and then its factory production lines, made the laborer a mere unit of production, chaining him as effectively to a spot as if he had been shackled to a girder. The Industrial Age spawned the Machine Age. Georges Bernanos, in his book *Tradition of Freedom*, always spells Machine with a capital letter. He argues that Society was taken by surprise by the invasion of the Machine and collapsed suddenly under the iron weight.

Whether that concept is correct or otherwise, men soon became slaves of the machines which they invented, and like all good slaves, took upon them the character of their masters. One

cannot survive long as a slave who does not adapt himself to the nature of the master. Of course, machines still required the thinking powers of men to survive, as the Romans required the intelligence of their slaves in order to continue, but the spirit of adventure was burned out of men chained to production lines as ancient slaves were chained to the galley seats.

There is little sense of conquest achieved by arousing each morning to the jarring sound of an electric alarm clock, catching a bus on the same corner, standing all day in the same factory location, fastening four lugs in the same place on each succeeding car, and eating the same food at the same time each day in the company cafeteria. A little bit of the spirit of adventure returns periodically at contract expiration date. Then the worker feels a tinge of pride at rearing up on his hind legs and confronting a giant corporation, a faceless entity, and threatening to walk out and keep walking "until hell freezes over."

Even then the worker is still a part of a System, which is merely a machine under another name. He does not get to fight the dragon directly. This is done by negotiators, some of whom are not above lining their pockets with some of the dues assessed against the workers. It is true that the worker can go down to the union hall and vote upon the contract, but here he is only one of a pushing, shoving group, cursing the company and yet hoping he can stay on the payroll. What can be done to rescue man from the bondage of things as they are, and give him an opportunity to become what creation meant him to be— a little lower than God?

Man must not be betrayed at this juncture into regarding an increased amount in his pay envelope as a worthy adventure. There is nothing about receiving just remuneration for services rendered which is wrong, nor is there any sin in increased fringe benefits commensurate with need. There is certainly nothing sinful about being granted an increasingly extended vacation

upon the basis of years of service, although what is done during a vacation may be quite sinful. But none of these make a man truly a Man, for even the ox which treads out the grain is worthy of sharing the grain which he treads out.

To become an adventurer one must seek for a new frontier which is worthy of his efforts as a rational being. But where will he go? If he back-packs into "the wilderness" he finds the ashes of burned-out campfires. He also finds empty cigaret packs and beer cans as well as discarded catsup bottles and mustard jars. Even the towering Himalayas have been so defiled by litter and human waste that consideration has been given to forbidding additional climbing on the snowclad slopes. Wherever one goes to get away from it all he finds the aged and fading legend carved on trees. "Kilroy was here."

It was a realization of the fact that we have been "walled in" by man's carelessness, indifference, hypocrisy and sham, which launched a lot of brilliant young people on the tragic experiment with drugs which now is proving so costly in ruined lives and the frightful increase in crime essential to support the habit. We make a mistake in judgment when we blindly assume that in its inception "the drug bit" was a deliberate attempt of a youthful society to prostitute and enslave itself. Instead, the youth regarded themselves as already prostituted and enslaved by a life-style in which they had no choice and, in their reasoning at the time and under peer pressure, they could see no alternative except to be used or be damned!

In their immature rationalization they concluded it was possible to ingest some chemical substance from without which would lift them out of what they regarded as a sordid state of existence and transport them into a new realm of fantasy which, with blown minds and distorted vision, they mistook for reality. It was not by accident they referred to "taking a trip" or "tripping out." Some of them died in agony. Others lived on as zombies, the walking dead. They had "freaked out" and were

doomed to be out until trampled down by the Pale Horse.

Nothing which one takes orally or needles into his veins will ever provide the new frontier in which he can struggle to find his own identity or measure up to his personal potential. One might as well hit himself on the head with a hammer and conclude that the stars he sees indicate he is in orbit in the heavens as to swallow some substance and think that the psychedelic pinwheels which dance around in front of him mean that he is upon Cloud Nine. That is why it is regrettable to see the turning to alcoholic beverages by the young, some of whom are still in the elementary grades. The drug addict and the alcoholic not only preclude discovery of a worthy frontier existence but render themselves incapable of relating to it when another seeks to lead them.

Man has now proven that he can survive in the ocean depths in a bathysphere. He has left his footprints upon the gray ash of the moon. Hardly a spot upon the surface of the earth has gone untouched. The North Pole has been reached, and men have lived and studied at the South Pole. Jungle fortresses have been penetrated, glacial ice-caps have been explored, remote deserts discovered, and deep caverns have yielded their secret treasures. It goes without saying that the search for frontiers must be extended beyond the merely material realm.

For this kind of research man is especially endowed and equipped. He is more than material. While he possesses, in common with animals, the kind of body essential to existence on this planet, he is unlike the animals. He is not simply a higher order of animal. He is in a class by himself, and a class to which no mere animal can aspire. No one can account for the creativity of man by presupposing that he originated in primordial ooze and made his way upward through the whole realm of irrational creatures. The research done with chimpanzees as "tool-making" primates only serves to implement the unbridgeable gap between a hairy vertebrate poking a twig into an ant-hole to

flush out insects, and the architect who designed the Senate Office Building. The chimpanzee does not think of the twig as a tool. It requires a human to make that kind of assessment.

Neither can one account for the development of conscience, that faculty enabling a man to decide as to the moral quality of his own actions or thoughts, and enjoining upon him that which he deems to be good, by an evolutionary process. At what point in "the upward climb" did man begin to sit in judgment upon his own thoughts upon the basis of conscience?

In older and simpler days it was sometimes argued that the ability of man to postulate the existence of God was proof that God existed. Whether that will stand up under the criteria of a more sophisticated logic I will not take time here to examine, but one thing it does prove is that man is not a trousered ape or a religious chimpanzee. The fact is that man is a threefold being consisting of body, soul and spirit. He is not so much a body possessed of a spirit, as a spirit possessed of a body, having hope of the life that now is and of that which is to come.

Because of this man can seek for spiritual frontiers and enter upon an adventure which transcends any thrill in the flesh. Almost everyone likes to read stories of pioneers, their hardships, sufferings and struggles against odds. It has already been stated that we cannot become pioneers in a geographical sense, but we can do so in the spiritual domain. J. B. Phillips refers to the early Christians as "pioneers of the new humanity" and since the new humanity has not yet reached its goal or destination we can join up and go along. It is my hope that in our succeeding pages I may motivate you to take a real trip. It will bow your heart but not blow your mind.

It is a suggestion of tremendous impact that we are strangers and pilgrims upon the earth. We are always in a foreign country. Moreover we are on battle duty. We are not passing through the land as tourists. We are on a seek and

search mission. We are commandos who have been dropped behind the lines. We are in the greatest warfare of all— the battle for the minds of men. If we really believe this and have pledged full allegiance to the ruler of the whole earth, life can never be humdrum. If we do not believe it we may be "of all men most miserable."

The Real Secret of Life

Contents

The greatest event which has ever happened on this planet took place in a smelly stable in the rear yard of a nondescript inn of a peasant village in an occupied territory. It was so important that it changed the calendar. It was as if time stood still and then started over again in a new creation. Even those who fly in the face of abundant evidence, and deny that it ever happened, cannot date a check, complete a contract, or write a letter without giving the lie to their arrogant assumption.

The arrival of Jesus was the signal that *God is with us*. That baby was Emmanuel! Man would never again have to go it alone. The rescue mission had made it. The bread had arrived for the starving prisoners. The water of life was here for the glassy-eyed captives. As the news spread abroad, hope was revived, life became meaningful, and direction was given to those who were lost and frightened.

It was like a blood transfusion for a dying patient. The world was sick— sick unto death. But the Great Physician took its pulse and prescribed faith, and the color came back into the pallid cheeks of society, and mankind rallied. It was the great transformation wrought by the Man from outside, and it accomplished what force of arms and marching soldiers had never been able to effect. He took no life but gave His own. The only blood He shed was that from His own veins. The world marveled and wondered and was altered!

"I am come!" These are the words of Jesus, over and over, as He defined His mission, made possible by the great divestiture, the emptying, the forfeiture of glory. The reasons for His coming are interwoven by the spun-gold thread of selflessness. And He has never changed. Just as He once came to the world of man He now comes to each man in the world who invites Him into his heart. Then He came by incarnation, now He comes by identification. Then He dwelled in His flesh, now He dwells in yours.

The whole point of this book is that each of you can enter into a transcendent personal sharing with the very Author of life so that while the outward man perishes, the inward man will actually experience daily renewal. This will enable you to put the whole scope of your being or existence into sharper focus so you will see the afflictions in the flesh are momentary and transitory. They contribute to your preparation for a "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

The one who is in Christ, and in whom Christ is, is still in the flesh while upon earth. He will grow older and become wrinkled. He will require the services of his dentist and physician. He will know the physical discomfort which others know because he is still in a corruptible body, that is, one which is subject to decay and decomposition. But the body is a tent in which he dwells, and the tent has to be dismantled or taken down so he can move out of it in preparation for taking possession of his "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

It is necessary to say this because there is a good deal of fuzzy thinking being spread about in our generation to the effect that the true disciple of Jesus need never experience pain, endure cancer or any other suffering in the flesh. The result is that one who has a heart attack or becomes paralyzed may feel that it is a symptom of faithlessness, a punishment for sin or a result of demon possession. In fact it may have no direct

relationship to any of these but is rather proof that we reside in a world where sickness and infirmity dwell.

Christians are not immune to germs. They may be beset by infection as certainly as their neighbors are. That this is true and is a condition of earth-life is confirmed by the fact that all those who preach immunity and offer to drive away disease for an offering, end up in hospitals, grow old and die, without exception. It is true that the Christian, because of the harmony of his life with nature and with nature's God, will avoid many of the diseases to which the profligate are subjected, but in times of epidemic the saints die as do the sinners.

THE UNBREAKABLE APPOINTMENT

It is appointed unto man once to die. Man did not make the appointment and cannot break it. He must keep it whether he is ready or not. The Christian no longer fears death. He recognizes it for what it is, a bus stop where he changes vehicles and boards one which leads to glory. A bus station is not the most comfortable place upon earth and one does not choose to linger there any longer than is necessary. But it is a welcome spot to the weary traveler bound for home, because he is inwardly buoyed up by his expectancy of joy. It is only those who have no certain destination and who are wanderers and vagabonds who are restless and upset.

Death does not make it possible to secure eternal life, for that is the present possession of the child of God. Death frees him from the limitations and inhibitions posed by the flesh and makes possible the enjoyment of that life on a higher and nobler plane. One reason we have the letters constituting the new covenant scriptures is to inform us and assure us that we have eternal life now (1 John 5:13). "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." This clearly divides the rational beings upon earth into two categories—

those who have life and those who do not! The difference is based upon having Christ or not having Him.

Eternal life is not so much an extension of existence as it is enjoyment of involvement. It's blessing lies in a quality of life rather than a quantity. It is not years upon a calendar but the satisfaction of a yearning in a calling. The possessor of eternal life may live more in one day than one without it would live in a month. Indeed, the latter cannot be said to live at all.

Certainly the most important thing for the earth-dwellers is to have Jesus. To receive Him is to be born of God. It is to be granted the right to become sons of God. This is affirmed by John 1:12, 13. Just as one is brought into an utterly new state when he is born of the flesh so he is brought into a wholly new state when he is born of God. Old things pass away; all things become new. To become a son of God is to be made free from all the claims of the flesh and the carnal nature.

The complete surrender to Christ leaves nothing that is not under His control. There is not an area of life outside of His jurisdiction. His flag waves over the entire territory of the heart. Paul writes to former fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, homosexuals, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, and extortioners, and admits the depth of their unrighteousness, but affirms that they were washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of God (1 Corinthians 6:9-11). One does not need to continue in blindness. He can see. He does not need to perish. A beautiful, blessed and beatific life can be his by God's grace. What He cannot do God will do for him.

It is at this point we need to consider the revolutionary aspect of the life inspired by the divine nature. Unfortunately, a great many things have arisen which obscure that phase or water down and weaken it until there is nothing startlingly different about the way the average Christian lives. He is just

"holding on until death of the body comes." We have been taught to think that attending religious services, giving money to worthy causes, and living decently in the community is really accomplishing the purpose of God in life. There is nothing wrong with any of these unless they are allowed to become substitutes for life itself. Then they become artificial and shallow performances.

We have all seen individuals who "attend church," to use a common but unwarranted expression, purely out of a sense of duty or obligation. They bring no joy to it and receive no joy from it. Indeed they would rather be somewhere else and grumble because they cannot be. Often the churches have to promote attendance by purely carnal means such as rival contests, prizes and awards. A record attendance under such conditions has no relation to spirituality. Going for the "body count" is a superficial evasion of life in the Spirit.

The secret of real life lies not in keeping or possessing it but in losing it. After Simon Peter had openly testified that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God, and the matter was out in the open, Jesus began to tell the disciples that He would go to Jerusalem where He would suffer many indignities at the hands of the religious hierarchy and be killed and raised again the third day. When Peter recoiled at the very thought of this, Jesus told them all, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me" (Matthew 16:24).

To show that this radical approach was the divinely-ordained way to meaningful existence He added, "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." One does not find his life by giving money, time or talent, to good and worthy enterprises, but by giving life. We tend to think of denying self in terms of giving up things as an overweight or obese person refuses candy or cake in the interest of weight reduction. He barters his desire for sweets for the satisfaction of a trimmer figure.

But Jesus is not talking of cutting down on things. He does not mean what we generally mean by the terms self-denial, temperance or moderation. All of that is good but it may be done for selfish reasons or for vanity. It is selfhood which must be denied. One must renounce all that he was, all that he is, all that he ever hoped to be, and become a new person, a part of a new humanity, by the creation of God.

The new role is one in which the one in Christ Jesus starts giving himself away. The cross which he takes up is not sickness, financial, loss, pain or physical suffering. The cross was an instrument of death, and the daily cross is not the daily lot of toil, but the daily dying by giving away self for others. As long as we think of the cross as consisting of trials, frustrations and depleting financial interests we will have a negative view. We will fret and complain. But giving yourself away when you have eternal life is the road to adventure. One of the cleverest ways of evading the cross is to substitute things for it.

THE GAMBLERS

It is in this light we must understand the implications of being in Christ. We are free to love and serve others and to do good unto all men, even our enemies. All of the great adventurers in history have been those who laid their lives on the line, not for gain, but in almost reckless abandon. They were not mercenaries but mercy-showers. They did not serve for compensation but for compassion. There is an element of risk in adventure as is evidenced by the word "venture" itself. It is interesting, in this connection, that the early Christians were referred to as "The Gamblers" by the pagans. When great plagues swept across the ancient cities, leaving a multitude dying in their homes, on the streets, and in the marketplaces, the heathen fled in sheer panic. But the Christians moved in and calmly brought cold water to feverish lips, nursing the sick and dying, and often dying by the side of those to whom they

ministered.

The appeal of gambling to the masses lies in the risk involved. It is remarkable how that element has been removed from the Christian life in our generation. Instead, Christians are often regarded as smug, placid, contented individuals whose greatest risk is that of a heart attack while playing volleyball or pitching horseshoes at the annual "church picnic." It is the very lack of living dangerously which turns young people off. They see no real gain being made against the enemy by sitting in air-conditioned rest homes (called churches) and recounting victories won two thousand years ago.

In the days of the Roman Empire which had developed the most formidable military machine on the face of the earth it was the Christians who were dubbed the "militants." It is not an accident that the treatise which immediately follows the records detailing the facts about the penetration of the human spectrum by Jesus is called Acts. The facts generate acts. In our day they often merely furnish sermon outlines.

A study of the chronicles of the Acts is very revealing. Words like power, praise and prayer abound. The activism of the disciples of Jesus is portrayed by the use of the word "went" in such segments as Acts 5. The Jerusalem saints who were scattered by unrestrained violence went everywhere preaching the word. Philip went down to Samaria. Peter and John came down to the same place. The angel of the Lord told Philip to "Arise and go toward the south." The next sentence says, "And he arose and went." The queen's financial secretary from Ethiopia came up out of the water of baptism and went on his way rejoicing. The command "Arise and go" is found over and over. There was a hustle and bustle of preparation and performance. The faith prompted pulsation and the marching orders were obeyed with alacrity and precision.

The bold proclamation of the resurrection of Jesus by two

men was enough to frighten the sectarian city fathers in Jerusalem into throwing the preachers into the town jail and holding them overnight without a trial. When two others arrived in Thessalonica the street loungers and Skid Row crowd organized a mob, assaulted a private house and formed a crowd at city hall yelling that those who had turned the world upside down had arrived. To be a disciple of Jesus was to be on the cutting edge of life and in the middle of the excitement.

The word radical means "root" and the true radical is one who gets to the root of a condition. This word has been misused and abused until it now describes one who has joined the wrecking crew and who is seeking to take the existing order apart. The word "radish" signifies a root vegetable. Radical surgery is that which removes all of the tissue essential to clear up or clean out a malignancy. Christians were, in the truest sense, getting to the very foundation of the human problem which is sin!

The Christian today in our part of the world is seldom in danger of being killed for the faith. He does not need to fear the stake, the rack or torture-chamber. The world has grown more sophisticated and this is reflected in the practice of the art of persecution. There are some things that are more precious than the beating of the physical heart or the inhalation of air into the lungs. When these things are denied many may actually prefer death of the body. To be branded a religious fanatic, to be shunned as a Jesus-freak, to be ridiculed as a "holy Joe"— these are things which often hurt more than stones which can only bruise the flesh.

It is because of the subtle form of suffering to which one is frequently subjected that he often compensates by trying to appear less consecrated than he really is. Few like to be thought of as saints and fewer still like to be branded as such. The concealment of deep convictions at school, at the office, or on the athletic field is "the way of life" for many. Actually it is "the way

of death," because convictions which are not shared are like plants which are not watered. They wither and die. To refuse to engage in an activity because one is a Christian, and to let it be known that this is the reason for not indulging, may bring sneers at the moment even while it engenders respect in the heart of the one who sneers. In any event it lends strength to the character of the one who refuses to sell out for cheap praise and who stands tall because of unshaken resolution.

It is my purpose to analyze with you some of the things Jesus said and did while He was here in a body like ours. That He was regarded as a dangerous radical no one can doubt who really "bones up" on the story. It causes a lot of people in our day to feel uncomfortable and resentful to even use the word "radical" in connection with Jesus. But that is because they are mistaken about two things. They do not understand the real meaning of radical, and they do not understand the meaning of the real Jesus. They are upset by political and social radicals who will do anything to secure notice in the newspapers or to perform in the glare of television cameras. In a very important sense Jesus may have been the only true radical who ever made the scene on earth.

He was not in the spotlight. He was the light spot in a darkened world. Men did not focus a light upon Jesus, but He focused His life upon them and the glare caused them to duck for cover. "Men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil." It is sometimes embarrassing to have someone turn the lights on suddenly, and it is sometimes embarrassing to remember that Jesus is listening to what you say and watching what you do. You cannot hide from Jesus.

The only way you can really learn about Jesus is by studying the Bible, especially that part of it comprising the new testament scriptures. As one of the writers put it, these writings were to inform us "of all that Jesus began both to do and teach." The Holy Spirit guided and supervised the writers and they gave

us the authentic divinely authorized "print out" which is now available unto all. If you ignore the Bible you will be ignorant about Jesus. I invite you to search the words of the Spirit and embrace the spirit of those words. If you do this your load will be lighter and depression will disappear. The reward is not fiction or fantasy. It is not "walking on air" but walking as an heir. Something rich is awaiting you! There is a deposit to your account if you will come in and identify yourself with Him. The "great breakthrough" occurs when you become serious about the word of God.

Someone has written as follows: "There is a copy of the American Constitution so delicately shaded in the copperplate type that it brings out in relief, as the observer stands off a little distance, the familiar features of George Washington, the founder of the American Republic, the man who made that great charter of liberty a national and enduring fact. From one point of view it is a chapter of political history; from another it is a portrait of the father of his country. So, while the Bible gives us the most ancient record of history, the most sublime poetry, the most lofty system of morals, the most vivid portraitures of human character, and the most extraordinary system of spiritual truth, yet, back of all and above all it sheds upon us 'the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ'"

The Master Teacher

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Jesus was a "situational teacher." He did not transfer people from where they were to somewhere else to instruct them. If He was in a home He taught in that home. If He was in the temple He taught in the temple. But He did not teach there because it was the temple. He taught there because the people were there. For the same reason He sometimes taught while sitting on a hillside, standing in a boat at the seaside, or walking along the road.

We have learned a lot about educational methods and techniques and we now move and manipulate people into controlled situations. We prepare everything ahead of time— the place, the lessons, the cafeteria luncheon— the whole bit. We must have a classroom with contour chairs and writing desks at just the right height and slant. The windows must be only upon one side of the room and so constructed as to admit light at the proper angle. The temperature must be regulated by thermostat. Our audio-visual materials have to be approved, assorted and arranged for the greatest impact.

It was not that way with Jesus. He never "conducted church" or "held services." He did not teach "classes." He walked and talked and stopped and chatted. He taught while the sun bore down and the crowd swatted flies and brushed off bugs. His illustrative materials were not made to order. He never got into a dither because His "supplies" did not arrive in the Saturday mail delivery. He pointed to birds of the air, lilies of

the field and gnats in a wineglass. He talked about farmers planting seed, fishermen casting nets and women making bread. When lunchtime arrived and everyone was famished and too far away from the nearest shopping mall, Jesus appropriated five hamburger buns and three sardines from an urchin who was the only one in the crowd with enough foresight to "brown bag it." Jesus never got uptight about the meagerness of what was available, so He blessed it and spread a fish fry for more people than an H. Salt Company Sea Food Galley, or an Arthur Treacher Fish and Chips Place could have fed in a month. It was a lot better than eating in the school cafeteria.

It is possible that in our attempt to "teach religion" as we generally refer to it, we have organized, structured and regimented things until we have pressed the life out of them. Of course Jesus never taught religion or theology. He simply shared life. In order to create a proper atmosphere we must have stained-glass windows to filter flecks of light into a cool darkened interior with a ghostly influence. Here "sermons" are delivered which change no lives and alter no outlooks. Perhaps if all of us stopped thinking of the faith as a way of life and regarded it as the life of the Way we would inject Jesus into every life encounter.

I have a friend who is one of the best formally educated men I have ever known. His degrees are from ivy-league schools and he is an instructor in one of the outstanding state universities in our land. A few years ago I asked him whom he considered to be the best teacher he had ever met. To my surprise he named an Ojibwa fishing guide in the far northern reaches of Canada. My friend had been on the verge of a nervous crackup when his doctor persuaded him to get away from it all for two weeks. He chose a remote fishing camp to which he flew in with a bush pilot.

His guide had been born and reared in a tumble-down cabin in the deep woods. He had never gone to school or read a

book. He could not write his own name. But he was surpassing wise in the lore of nature. From him my friend learned the mythology of the tribes. He listened with fascination to the account of the habits of wildlife and the ways of the wilderness. If education is the equipping of one to adjust to his surroundings and to survive within them, this illiterate Indian was educated. He knew the world in which he existed. He drew his lessons from it. And this was the way it was with Jesus the master-teacher. The world was His schoolroom!

SPIKING A FALLACY

In our sophisticated age there is a fallacy commonly bandied about which needs to be corrected. It is frequently assumed that what Jesus said is outmoded and outdated. But truth does not deteriorate with time. It does not come with an "obsolescence factor" built in as part of the standard equipment. It is as true today as when Jesus spoke it. And man has not outgrown his need for it. Human nature has not changed. The man who boards a jet plane at Kennedy International may be the very same kind of person who boarded a mule at the Sheep Gate in Jerusalem. A sinner is no less sinful because he can get from one place to another with greater rapidity.

The fact is that what Jesus said is as apropos and timely as what you read in your morning newspaper. It may even be a little more poignant because it was not subject to "the blue pencil treatment" to force it to conform to a journalistic code or an editorial policy. Jesus zeroed in on the problems that you face in your subdivision or aldermanic ward. He dealt with adultery, divorce, lawsuits, vandalism and violence. But he also faced up to problems dealing with the generation gap, as well as hatred, inner tension and isolationism. His advice has never been supplanted or superseded because He could read the thoughts and intents of hearts before they were translated into actions. He did not stretch men out on a couch and encourage them to recall

emotions so He could probe them for meaning. We are told that He did not need someone to tell Him about men for "He knew what was in man." The Great Physician was not "a shrink."

There is every indication that most of the woes of the world would have been alleviated and eliminated if the universal lordship of Jesus had been respected. There would have been no wars to make cannon fodder out of human bodies. Courts and judges and prisons would have been relegated to the past. Racial tensions accompanied by street riots and rip-offs would never have occurred. "There would have been no sectarian rivalry with its consequent train of skepticism and unbelief. Jesus did not merely have a solution. He is the solution." No wonder the message about Jesus is called the Good News!

There is something compelling about the way Jesus lived and the things He said. I know a prominent business executive who learned this the hard way. He is head of a huge manufacturing concern with plants scattered through several southern and western states. He is the "gung-ho type" and drove himself relentlessly day and night, to increase production and to keep things booming. He did not have time for serving God because he was so occupied serving his ambitious appetite. He neglected his wife and family and tried to compensate by giving them things. He sent them on vacations and joined them for a weekend or two, flying in with an attache case of plans and documents to which he addressed himself until time to go to the air terminal and return to the city and his office.

Then it happened! He developed a pain in his upper chest which would not go away. He could not raise his arm to shave because of the hurt. He could not bend to tie his shoes. When he called his physician he was whisked away in an ambulance to the intensive care ward where the monitor measured the raggedness of his heart pulsations. When he was finally removed to a private room the doctor gave strict orders that he was not to see any of his business associates or discuss financial affairs. Only his

family was admitted and they were restricted to the regular visiting hours.

He found himself eagerly awaiting the arrival of his wife and teen age children. He dreaded to see them go. The television set bored him and the newspaper did not satisfy him. The afternoon of the third day he took the Bible out of the drawer of the bedside stand. He opened it casually and began to read the account of Jesus as given by Luke. In spite of the heavy catalog of names in the family tree of the thirty-year old Jesus, by the time he arrived at the statement of Jesus to the devil that "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God," he was hooked. Later, he said that as he read on, he had the sensation of being a corpse looking at himself in a mirror. He realized that, measured by the criteria of God, he had never really lived at all, but Jesus was revealing him to himself "warts and all."

By the time he left the hospital he was a completely changed man. He now believes that God knocked him down so He could lift him up. As he puts it, "God used a physical heart attack to attack my spiritual heart." One of his associates said, "He is a Bible junkie, as high on the Word as an addict on heroin." He presents a copy of the Bible to every new employee. He teaches a thirty-minute noonday Bible study every Monday in the courtesy room of a Savings and Loan Association of which he is one of the directors. But, best of all, he has time for his wife and children and it is apparent that all of them have entered into a whole new dimension of love. No preacher persuaded the man to commit his life. The words of Jesus penetrated his consciousness, stripped him naked, showed him to himself in his true light and pointed him in the right direction.

Of course Jesus does not just "zap" business executives with the Message. I can testify to that because I know what happened to a construction worker in one of the states of the Great Northwest. He dropped out of school when he was in the sixth grade and "went on the lam." Being a great big overgrown,

red-haired, freckle-faced kid, he lied about his age, and got jobs at manual labor in any area to which he drifted. He could not even remember the names of all the towns where he had bedded down. He had worked in beet fields, turkey processing plants, service stations, lumber mills and truck terminals. Somewhere along the way he had developed an insatiable thirst for liquor, and by the time I met him he had become a disreputable, unshaven, tattered tramp who stayed on the job only long enough to get enough money to become tanked and get glassy-eyed drunk.

What I am going to say will sound as incredible to you as it seemed to me at the time. Two men who were formerly "rounders" by their own testimony came to the conclusion that God had called them to work among humanity's flotsam and jetsam, to salvage the human driftwood cast up by the tide of life. When they first saw the man of whom I speak, he was stoned and sleeping on a park bench. They put him into their car and took him to their quarters to sober him up. Gently they told him what Jesus had done for them and how they had been rescued from the pit of hell. At first the man was suspicious and belligerent. But they never gave up and when they began to read the Bible to him he developed a hunger for the truth. When I saw him he was clean and back on the job. He was making good money and using it to help all kinds of needy cases. He told me that he could not resist the teaching about Jesus. He particularly liked the version called Good News for Modern Man, and carried a copy with him to read on the job. He showed me the book and it was underlined on almost every page.

LOVE LETTERS FROM JESUS

The Bible is not a cold and concise code of laws. Jesus did not come to make us great lawyers but good lovers. There is a difference between the state statutes and a love letter from a dear friend. It is at this point many are turned away before they

hardly begin to know Jesus. They have been subjected to debates, arguments and hassles over the meaning of this point or that until Jesus is lost in the sectarian shuffle. Reading the Bible is like studying mathematics to many. It is made a methodical, calculating experience, but it is hard to fall in love with a calculator, even if it gives you all the right answers.

It is axiomatic that when you truly love a person you want to please the object of your affection. There is a loyalty about love that expresses itself in devotion and constancy. One who loves Jesus wants to be like Him. Under no circumstances would he deliberately offend Him or bring sadness to Him. But we are subjected to so many pressure groups in our day which seek to use Jesus as a gimmick that it is difficult to truly know Him. Cults and sects pour Jesus into their theological moulds and make plastic reproductions of Him. Sometimes quite literally. The danger is that, almost without thinking, we substitute loyalty to the group for love for Jesus.

Of course we must realize that even while we deplore such misuse and abuse there is in it a subtle but effective tribute to Him. Men realize that Jesus has such power and appeal that you cannot leave Him out of a religious movement and get it off the ground. One may hate to see the face of his favorite football hero on T-shirts, toys and tricycles, but it would not be there if he were not famous. I do not recall seeing a rear bumper sticker with the caption "One Way— Confucius!!" Our task is to separate the real Jesus from the distorted images, so we will not go galloping off over the hill following a phantom. It is for this reason we have the Bible and we should immerse ourselves in its revelation, not because it is good literature, although it is, but because it contains the secret of life— eternal life.

In Times Like These

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Anyone who has lived fifty years has been in two different worlds. The world of the last quarter of the twentieth century is not the world of the first quarter. The century began with philosophers cheerfully predicting the advent of a "golden age." Machines were taking the drudgery out of human labor. New forms of transportation were being invented which were expected to revolutionize travel and the hauling of commodities to market. It was freely believed the skies would be conquered and the ocean would become a highway for sleek ships plying the waters of every continent.

Poverty would be banished. Education would become universal. Illiteracy would disappear. Leisure to be utilized in self-improvement would be increased. It was a dream woven from the fantasy that man was basically good and not evil. Only environment shaped character, and when slums disappeared the slum mentality would disappear with it. Education was the magic wand which could be waved to banish the dirty, the ugly and the unseemly. Man had the potential to change his world and given due exposure to the arts and sciences he would do it.

The dream exploded like a balloon filled with hot air when two conflicts of such magnitude as to deserve the designation World Wars, swept over the globe like the poisoned breath of hell, with a frightful depression sandwiched in between. In the very year that the self-styled "Pastor" Russell, father of the cult now called Jehovah's Witnesses, predicted the times of the

Gentiles would be fulfilled and universal peace be ushered in, the first World War broke out. In the United States of America the death of hope was hard and lingering. Woodrow Wilson was elected for a second term on the basis of the shouted slogan, "He kept us out of war." When we entered the rapidly-spreading conflict shortly thereafter we did so in the forlorn hope that we were fighting the war which would end all wars.

The depression served to give the lie to the prophecy that in our land poverty would disappear, lingering only in memory as a crude relic of those days when man had not yet achieved his full potential. Bankrupt financial tycoons dashed themselves to the sidewalk from the windows of palatial suites in skyscrapers. Wealthy men of the year before sold apples on the street corners. Freight trains were filled with gaunt and starving men moving from place to place in the forlorn hope of finding employment. The slightest rumor set off a stampede. Long lines formed at soup-kitchens hastily set up in cities, where one could get a bowl of hot gruel and a crust of day-old bread. The garbage cans in the alley at the rear of hotels and restaurants were thoroughly picked over for the morsels which they held, and for which human beings fought with rodents.

But it was the second World War which finished off the idea that deep down inside of every human being there is a reservoir of good which requires only an emergency to bring it to the surface and relate it to human need. The concept that education, learning in technology, and exposure to theology make it possible for a people to have a polish which reinforces natural moral goodness was buried in the mass graves where thousands had been lined up and methodically shot in the head and were still twitching and groaning when huge bulldozers pushed the cover of dirt in upon their emaciated and skeletal frames. It was wafted away in the blue-gray smoke from the furnaces in concentration camps where human beings were fed to the flames like ranks of cordwood.

Man's inhumanity to man, of which the poet wrote, reached its zenith in Germany, and not in some remote emerging nation seeking to free itself from black magic and voodoo. Here was a nation known for its refinement. Its educational system reached back to the Middle Ages, and under its benign influence illiteracy virtually became nonexistent. Great universities such as those at Marburg, Cologne, Munich, Tubingen, Jena, Berlin and Leipzig had become world-renowned. Heidelberg University, established in 1386, was justly famous.

Germany was the land of Luther and the Reformation. Its populace had been exposed to a culture shaped by theological discussion. Powerful preachers declaimed from the pulpits of great religious edifices. But much of the ritual proved to be superficial and in the showdown with naked power and raw savagery the faith went underground to avoid open encounter.

Out of the experience of war came cynicism and unbelief. The moral code of the past was swept away by the blood of the battlefield. A new order came in on the wings of revolution. Men secretly doubted the existence of a God who remained silent during the holocaust. The world was becoming secularized. The new religion was humanism. An affluent society basked in the sheer enjoyment of things. Hedonism, with its pandering to the sensual became the new philosophy. Once more the slogan of the ancient Epicureans became the guiding light for action. "Let us eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we may die."

The spirit of adventure was being smothered by the life of indolence and ease. It sought to exist for awhile in the rarefied atmosphere of self-indulgence but finally gasped its last. In its expiration it took with it man's purpose for existence. The frontiers had disappeared. The land had all been staked out. There were no more rivers to cross and no more mountains to climb.

As the knowledgeable historian reads the daily newspaper

and the weekly news magazine he is struck with the fact that what he is reading is not really new. He has read it all before. And as he begins searching for the time in history which provided a preview for the present, it dawns upon him that the era which began with the death of Julius Caesar on the Ides of March, and continued through the first century of the Common Era, was just such a time as this. Increasingly, men with analytical minds who are interpreters, as well as chroniclers of events, are saying this in their books. Even *Time* magazine in its issue for August 23, 1976, published a bicentennial essay which compared the state of affairs in Rome at her fall with conditions in our society today.

It was this world into which the Son of God descended to become the Son of man. It was this world which was penetrated by the most outstanding missionary who ever lived. And it was this man who, in a letter addressed to residents of the capital of the world government, painted a lurid picture of the degradation and vice which prevailed, and which causes a shudder to go through the frame of the sensitive reader to this day. Against that world, a little minority group made up of social outcasts and virtual unknowns, pitted its strength in a dedicated effort and won! They were soldiers of the cross, an emblem of shame, and they did not stop until that cross was made an ensign of honor and courage.

Theirs was a battle for the minds of men. They were not interested in lowering national banners of cloth and hoisting a literal flag to flap in the breeze above government structures. As one of the soldiers put it, "For though we live in the world we are not carrying on a worldly war, for the weapons of our warfare are not worldly but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every proud obstacle to the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:3-5).

This is battlefield talk, but there is one phrase which stands

out like a towering peak. Divine power to destroy! This was a search and seizure mission. Those who volunteered for it knew that a malign force was loose in the universe. It enslaved the minds of men and motivated them to every kind of vicious behavior. They designated the hidden and mysterious proponents of that ruthless force as "the world rulers of this present darkness" (Ephesians 6:12). But the battalions of the cross carried no visible weapons. They were out to take thoughts captive and you do not capture thoughts by sword or spear, or by side arms or cannon. And they won the war!

Since the Prince of the Universe is again enlisting troops to battle "the spiritual hosts of wickedness," let us understand the kind of a world in which the ragged remnant won such a victory in Century 1. One historian, Frederic W. Farrar, in a book which he dedicated to his friend Robert Browning, the poet, began with these words: "The epoch which witnessed the early growth of Christianity was an epoch of which the horror and the degradation have rarely been equalled, and perhaps never excelled, in the annals of mankind."

Rome had become a world power but was rotten to the very core. One of the contributing forces to inner corruption was the fact that there were sixty-million slaves in the empire. These had no family, no unifying faith, no hope, and no recognized rights. We get an insight into how slaves were regarded from Marcus Terrentius Varro, who was employed by Julius Caesar to collect and arrange the great memorial library of Rome. Varro himself wrote about 620 books, covering a score of subjects. In a volume on husbandry he divides farm instruments into three categories— the articulate, the inarticulate and the mute. The first comprised the slaves, the second the cattle and asses, and the last the vehicles. A slave was a farm animal, a brute, possessed of the power of speech. He had no more rights than a farm wagon or hay rake.

Marcus Porcius Cato, commonly referred to as "the Elder"

to distinguish him from his illustrious great-grandson of the same name, was born on a farm in Tusculum, and grew up in a rural setting. He retained a love for the simple life and became a real enemy of Greek culture which he believed was destroying the very foundation of manliness and virtue. His book *De Agricultura* advises farmers to discard everything that is incapable of further production. Plows that were broken should be thrown on the scrap-heap. Cattle that were too old to draw a burden should be killed, slaves who were aged and sick should be allowed to starve to death.

As a result of the multiplicity of slaves there were two ensuing conditions which eventually caused the empire to disintegrate. One was the lordly pride of the wealthy nobility which looked upon all work as contemptible and undignified. The upper classes were indolent. They lolled about sumptuous banquet tables, engaged in sexual orgies and excesses, and through gluttony and lust created an age of monotony and despair from which thousands sought escape by suicide.

Those who owned hundreds of slaves had to expand their acreage in order to keep them employed and to feed them. Inflated prices were offered for land and small farmers, previously the backbone of the nation, sold out to syndicates and moved into the cities. Italy was converted from a rural to an urban culture with all of the tragic upsets which occur under such a transformation. Unsuited to city life the peasants became beggars and idlers, demanding that the government furnish them food and games for entertainment. They turned the civic center of Rome into a slum district where they existed in six and seven story *insulae,* government housing projects which were dirty, miserable and dangerous. Murder and violence became an accepted way of life in the narrow winding rabbit-warren of streets. The "long hot summers" were filled with screams and cries for help which were seldom heeded because of the fear of personal danger from involvement.

Pornography flourished in every form. This word means literally "the writing of harlots," and referred originally to the drawings and suggestive poetry used by prostitutes to lure customers. In the age of the apostles it was rife. A good example is found in the ruins of Pompeii, destroyed by an eruption of Vesuvius in 79 A.D., while the apostle John was still living. When the site was excavated in modern times the moral filth and obscenity portrayed upon the walls of the homes and public baths was so vicious that the general public was debarred from access to some areas.

It is generally conceded that the literature started on the road toward utter and fatal degeneracy with the writings of Titus Maccius Plautus, who died less than two centuries before the birth of Jesus. Plautus went to Rome while very young and was employed in a theater. He took the money he made and invested it in a business which ended in bankruptcy, forcing him to secure employment in a mill. It was at this time he decided upon a career of writing comic and satirical plays for the stage. His plots were all based upon love affairs, some of them homosexual in nature. He is credited with more than a hundred productions, some of which were vulgar and bawdy burlesques. He set the tone and prepared the stage and it was climaxed in the sordid fiction of men like Gaius Petronius, who committed suicide the year that Paul was beheaded.

The state of things in the Empire was reflected in the decay of married life and the downfall of the home. In the early days family life was a sacred and treasured heritage. For 520 years divorce was absolutely unknown, until Carvilius Ruga divorced his wife in 234 B.C. This opened the flood-gate and marital fidelity was swept away in the on-rushing tide. Before long, according to Horace and Ovid, Roman poets who lived near the time of Jesus, marriage had fallen into such disrepute that free love was advocated without legal restraint.

Seneca, the philosopher, was contemporary with Paul. He

had been recalled from exile by Agrippina, wife of the emperor Caligulus, in 49 A.D. to serve as tutor for Nero. It was Gallic, the brother of Seneca, who was proconsul of Achaia, when Paul was brought before him by a Jewish mob (Acts 18:12). Seneca is an authority for the condition of things at the very time in which we are interested. He declared that "women were married to be divorced, and divorced in order to marry." He also added that noble Roman matrons counted the years not by the Consuls, but by their discarded or discarding husbands.

It is remarkable how the writers of the age emphasize the fact that children were neither wanted nor desired. To have a family was regarded as a serious misfortune. Children were regarded as units of consumption and not production. They acted as drags upon the social life. When there were children they were placed under the care of slaves who were decrepit and useless for other work, and they soon caught the contagion of vice by which they were everywhere surrounded.

In the maelstrom of horror and immorality, of cruelty and sadism, moved the little band of adventurers, who had enlisted under the standard of the crucified One. They knew they were engaged in a war for life and death. Their writings betoken the fact that they recognized themselves as soldiers. Their metaphorical allusions are those of the battle-field. They were fighting the good fight of faith. They endured hardships and combat weariness. There was nothing namby-pamby, wishy-washy or fiddle-faddling about their lives. They were not play-acting. It was for real!

Their persecution was real. They spoke of fiery trials, of suffering and abuse. But they also talked of victory and triumph. They comforted and strengthened one another. And they won the fight. Their voice went out to all the earth and their words to the ends of the world. Now the call comes to you! It comes incessantly! It comes with the fresh breeze of the morning as you awaken. It comes on the night winds that blow outside your

window. It is the call to enroll and enlist, to join the martyr-ranks of the ages.

It is the call to identify with the Christ who died, and with the multitude of the living who need Him. No one else can take your place. If you resist and refuse, the ranks will be broken where you ought to be. Rise up above the trivia of daily life and join the force of the world-beaters, the joy-proclaimers, the strangers and pilgrims who are marching toward glory. The new frontier is spiritual! There are undiscovered areas in your own heart and soul. There are depths of being not yet probed. There are soul-heights not yet ascended. Find them and take possession of them for the absent King!

The Real Jesus

Contents

Not long ago I was caught in one of those quick and heavy summer downpours which are so typical of our part of the midwest. I took refuge in a service station from which I could watch the slanted shafts of rain splatter against the concrete, creating a pattern of crazily dancing drops which merged with the gathering run-off draining toward the gutter. The shower lasted only about ten minutes and was succeeded by bright sunshine which caused clouds of steam to rise from the sidewalk.

I resumed my walk almost at once but not before a couple of barefoot boys had launched their paper boats on the rushing torrent swirling along the curb. The water was dirty and filled with debris washed up in its progress. This made no difference to the lads who were following their miniature vessels in great glee. The frail boats were swept along relentlessly, gaining impetus as new freshets swept in to swell the stream from cross streets. When they neared the entrance to the storm sewer their owners tried to rescue them but it was too late. They were swept under by the sucking pull of the current and disappeared from sight.

As I continued on my way I could not help but meditate about the fact that the fragile vessels aptly represented a lot of people whom I knew. One minute they were being borne along gaily on the onrushing tide but the end is certain destruction. There flashed into my mind the image of an attractive girl who grew up in a remote rural area of our state. Her parents were

possessed of what is sometimes referred to as "an old-fashioned faith" in God. It was real and genuine. They reared their children to trust in God and took them regularly to a little village church from the time they were old enough to be carried outside the home.

The girl to whom I refer developed a sense of rebellion while still in the consolidated high school to which the bus transported her daily. As she read about the glamorous life in the city, and saw it portrayed on the television screen, she began to feel that she was being cheated. Finally, after a little encounter with her mother over some trivial incident, she ran off and made her way to the city about which she had fantasized. Desperate and lonely she fell for the blandishments of a boy who flattered her, and they were married after she lied about her age to secure a license. In a few months she became pregnant and her husband disappeared as quickly as he learned about her condition.

It is not necessary to detail what happened. With her dream castle shattered into fragments she knew the dark depths of depression. She contemplated taking her life but recoiled from the suicide pit as she lingered on the very rim of it. The thing I cannot understand is, that now, having gone through the ordeal, she has plunged back into the muddy waters again. She is living with a man to whom she is not married, drinking liquor to the excess, getting her nightly entertainment in the cheap music of a local tavern, and staying up until the wee small hours. When I went to talk with her about Jesus she brushed me off. She told me she was living at last and did not want to be bothered. She is a paper ship tossed on a rushing tide and headed for the sewer.

There are millions in our generation who are caught up in the swim and who will continue to be engulfed by the raging waters of vice, drugs or drunkenness. Once when we were at Niagara Falls I was standing on the fenced platform overlooking the rushing cascade. A city policeman was standing next to me

and he observed that a great many tourists standing at this vantage point experienced a fatal fascination which created a momentary desire to plunge into the swiftly gliding stream.

It is not only moving water which has such an allure. The surging mass of mankind swept along in the impulse for pleasure, gratification, and earthly recognition draws many a person from a place of safety into the maelstrom which swirls into death. A good example is a former preacher of my acquaintance. Reared in the church he grew up with an ambition to preach, and as soon as he was old enough, enrolled in a school devoted to preparing men for the pulpit. He excelled in courses in the Bible and received special honor as a public speaker. Before he graduated he was offered a pulpit position in a congregation where he had been supplying on weekends. He accepted and married his high school sweetheart who grew up in the same congregation as himself. Together they had sponsored youth meetings and exhibited outstanding ability in working for worthy causes. For five years they were happily joined together and then their marriage began to go sour.

He became involved in an affair with another woman, older than himself, and it became such a matter of public knowledge that he was dismissed. His wife left him and secured a divorce. He began to drift about until finally he married a woman whose husband had divorced her for "cheating" on him. For a long time the former preacher avoided me like the plague. It was this which caused me to be so amazed when a car pulled into my driveway and I saw him emerge.

When we sat down in the livingroom it was evident that he was nervous and fidgety. He clasped and unclasped his fingers. He was perspiring even though the room was not warm. I could see that he was unkempt and no longer the polished professional I knew a few years before. Finally he told me that he simply had to talk to someone. I resolved inwardly to listen without interruption, difficult as it is for me to do so. He poured out a

torrent of words. It was obvious he had dammed up the communication stream and now that the floodgate was opened he could not stop. I listened for more than two hours as he painted a picture of his life from his first memory.

He was quite convinced that he had always been a hypocrite, shamming it and playing to the grandstand. Even while preaching the messages which won such approval from the audience, his mind was somewhere else and on other things. It was a sordid story of one who began to read pornographic material and became "hooked" on it. He turned his mind into a pig-sty. He hid "girlie magazines" in the same place where he kept his Bible and sermon materials. The lust which began as a spark became a consuming fire until his influence was destroyed and the hearts of his best friends shattered to fragments by his behavior.

There are some things to learn from these two cases which may not be as rare and exotic as we would like to think they are. Without becoming "preachy" or indulging in "pulpiteering" I would like to point out a few things. Merely attending Sunday School regularly and being exposed to the sheltered environment it provides is no guarantee that one will "turn out right" to use a timeworn expression. Both of those I have mentioned were medal winners for Sunday School attendance. The first one received as a gift a Bible five years straight for perfect attendance.

Certainly we need not sit in judgment upon the worth of the Sunday School, which has had an influence for good upon many. But there is a real question as to what permanent impact is to be derived from merely attending any kind of religious institution and "going through the motions" required to conform to the established pattern. Not long since I was a panel member with an eminent judge of a juvenile court. In response to a question from the audience he said that about as many offenders who stood before him had been reared in Sunday

Schools as not. He added, "Character is not formed by institutions such as churches or schools. It is a product of the intimate relationships in the home."

Merely graduating from a school of preaching or standing in the pulpit does not make one good. Putting the old man in a new place will no more change one's life than taking a robber from his prison cell and locking him in a bank vault will transform him. Both of the persons to whom we referred had read the Bible, memorized passages, and said prayers. None of these acted as a bulwark against temptation or sin when the test became great. It is only when such demonstrations are symptoms of the new birth that they are really valid. Turning over a new leaf at intervals is not enough. We must turn up with a new life. It was Billy Sunday who pointed out that taking a man to church will no more make a Christian out of him than taking him to the garage will make an automobile out of him.

Even prayer can become monotonous repetition, a kind of soul-deadening ritual with about as much spiritual value as the chant of a tobacco auctioneer. Jesus said that it was so to the heathen. It is only when prayer becomes one side of a conversation with a loved one that it has meaning. If it is a monologue recited to another out of habit there will be no cleaning, comfort or consolation. It must be a dialogue with full conviction that one's words are heard and a response is given.

Lately the fear has been expressed that, with the advent of so many versions of the Bible, there will be an end to the memorization of scriptural texts. Our more immediate ancestors grew up with but one translation, that authorized by King James to be read in the Anglican churches, and first printed in 1611. It lent itself to memory work since it was in the same stately dialect as that in which Shakespeare wrote. It was poetic and romantic. Families memorized whole chapters, reciting them together in the light from the glowing fireplace in long winter evenings. This was commendable and influenced both thought and literature

greatly.

However, we must remember that the mechanical repetition of a great collection of verses means little, and might place one in the same category as others who could reel off the entire collection of Mother Goose rhymes without a hobble. It is possible that memorization may suffer in our day but this means no lessening of interest in the word of God. The very multiplicity of translations is an indication of growing concern for the sacred scriptures. They would not be produced if no one purchased or read them. It is also arguable that those who do read them will be drawn closer to God if they understand what they are reading. To wade through archaic literary forms may discourage some before they are hardly started.

It is possible to have a head full of scriptural quotations and a heart empty of Jesus. The written word was not given to provide an exercise in mental retentiveness but to lead us to moral repentance. It is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path but we should never become so hung up on the nature of light that we sit down and philosophize about it until we never use our feet or tread the path. One does not spend all of his time gazing at a light or studying it, but busies himself performing his tasks in the glow that it sheds. The purpose of the scripture is to lead us unto Christ, and if we are led somewhere else we have already abused it.

The real spiritual adventure comes when one is personally identified with Jesus in the task of world conquest. Because this is a spiritual warfare and there are no battlefields bathed in gore or bestrewn by corpses grown rigid in grotesque shapes we may be prone to undervalue its importance. The fact is that it is the ultimate struggle, destined to end in world sovereignty for one Person. Every intelligent being in heaven, on earth, and in the nether regions will acknowledge His right to reign. Every knee shall bow. Every tongue will confess. To be a part of this Grand Design is to be involved in the glorious hope, the brilliant future.

This raises a real question. Why is it that those who hear about Jesus do not all come to Him? Why is it that some who have answered His call desert Him when the going gets tough or they become weighted down with their own shortcomings. I think the answer lies in the fact that the first hear about Jesus but never hear Him. He is presented as a hero in the past, a crusader who flung down the gauntlet to clerical rip-off artists in the temple who exploited the poor, or as a legendary figure who performed great feats that astonished the populace. To a secularistic age He appears as a kind of combination Robin Hood and Paul Bunyan.

There are a lot of things to distort the image of Jesus and keep us from seeing Him as He is. The modern church often comes between a man and Jesus. He must be looked at through sectarian lens ground to a traditional prescription. His teaching must be put through a theological meat grinder and moulded into sermon-wrapped patties of orthodoxy before being peddled for public consumption. The result is a world which has no clear picture of what Jesus said and even less of an idea what He meant by what He said.

It is a rather common fallacy to suppose that the new covenant scriptures as presently compiled, constitute a written code of laws and provide a meticulous pattern of forms, structures and ceremonies, to be rigidly enforced in all ages. Such a position always ends in the concept that a proper relationship to the Father of all mercies can only be maintained by conformity with the deductions and interpretations of each sect, and since these differ, division is assured and perpetuated.

The tragedy of the legalistic view is that it promotes strife among the more ardent students of scripture. The unconcerned and indifferent have no real interest in the study of revelation. The debates about meanings are carried on by clergymen, specialists who devote years of research to the text, not necessarily to walk closer to Jesus, or to develop a greater

measure of compassion, but to defend partisan viewpoints. This results from an unhealthful and unscriptural view of the purpose of the new covenant scriptures which were intended, not to separate brother from brother, but to guide all into a more meaningful relationship with Jesus through the indwelling Holy Spirit.

None of us can be sure of how our Lord would deal with some of the situations which confront us in this technological era. There are issues with moral overtones for which no specific solutions are provided in the Word of God. The apostles never confronted some of them. Jesus has left us no bill of particulars and has given us no legal code with all of the contingencies spelled out in fine print or explained in footnotes. We do not even have a biography providing a complete account of his life upon earth. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John had no intention of giving us a history of His career. With one exception they skip over thirty years of a life that lasted even less than thirty-four years. They merely set forth those events which would provide proof to a rational mind that He was who He claimed to be, the Son of God! They later admitted that Jesus did many things they did not chronicle and said, "But there are many other things which Jesus did; were everyone of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that could be written" (John 21:25). This means there is much more about the visit of Jesus on earth that we do not know than there is that we do know.

The same thing holds true with the letters written by the apostles. All of these were sparked by human situations and predicaments. After Paul had dealt with a number of the problems which plagued God's people in Corinth, he wrote, "About the other things I will give directions when I come" (1 Cor. 11:34). We do not know what the other things were and we do not know what directions were given.

When John wrote to a prominent sister in Christ and her

children, he concluded his brief letter with the words, "Though I have much to write unto you, I would rather not use pen and ink, but I do hope to come and see you and talk with you face to face, so that our joy may be complete" (2 John 12). To Gaius, whom he admired, the aged apostle wrote, "I had much to write to you, but I would rather not write with pen and ink; I hope to see you soon, and we will talk together face to face" (3 John 13, 14). Perhaps it is as well that he did not write more. The religious world has been fighting for centuries over the little he did write.

God does not deal with us in these last days as with children. He has not supplied us a rule book with appendices in which every phase of spiritual activity is spelled out for us in detailed specifications. We must ascertain those principles which governed our Lord and apply them as best we can in the Jet Age which is far removed from the days of Herod Agrippa and Pontius Pilate. Fortunately those principles have never been abrogated by heaven nor superseded by any superior wisdom of mankind. We can, by a proper study of the greatest life ever to bless this earth, learn that personal approach which will be best for us during our brief life span. I should like to suggest a few things which appear to me to have relevance for our day. I believe they will help us to better manifest that spirit exhibited by our Lord, in his contact with the problems to which we are heir by being in this kind of world.

1. Jesus exhibited a genuine sense of priority values. He did not recognize every command of God as of equal weight and significance. He knew there were certain requirements that were central to our relationship while others were peripheral. When a lawyer asked Him which was the greatest commandment in the law Jesus did not say there was no such thing. Instead He recited the command to love God. He said, "This is the first and great commandment." He then gave the second and said it was like the first, "You shall love your neighbor as your self." He added an important comment, "On these two hang all the law and the

prophets."

This is a forceful statement because it shows that love for God and neighbor is basic. From these two commands every other thing required is suspended. One might break the formal and ritualistic requirements and while he would be held accountable for these infractions the relationship would remain intact, but if he rejected or violated the foundational requirements the whole structure would tumble in disarray. The lawyer was discerning enough to see this. He replied, "Master, you have spoken the truth . . . to love God . . . and to love your neighbor as yourself— that is far more than any burnt offerings or sacrifices." The record says, "When Jesus saw how sensibly he answered, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God."

The converse of this must be true so that when a man regards ritual and ceremonial requirements as being on par with personal relationship to God and his brethren he is a long way from the kingdom. One nears the kingdom, according to Jesus, when he sensibly approaches the problem of our relationship as contrasted with legal demands. Yet most of the divisions in the family of God have been caused by some aspect of tragic error at this juncture. Jesus knew that the law was given by God but He knew there were weightier matters than some of the keen points of distinction which had been arrived at by the scrupulous legalistic minds of the scribes. All truth is equally true but it is not all equally important. It is true that "Methuselah lived 969 years and he died," but that is not nearly so important as the fact that Jesus died for my sins. One is as Biblical as the other, but one is not as weighty as the other in the divine-human relationship.

2. Jesus evaluated the relationship with a brother as taking precedence over a formal act of religious service. "If you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before

the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift." The altar was ordained of God. It was the very center of expression of national worship. The most important religious ritual was to be interrupted to establish a proper relationship with a brother. Jesus would never have considered that a thing was settled so long as division existed between brethren.

Sacrifice at the altar was intended to bridge the chasm between man and God which was caused by transgression. But if there was a rift between man and man it must be spanned first. The apostle John declared, "If a man does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?" Again he writes, "By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (1 John 3:16). In a certain place in the southern part of Missouri there is a great bridge over the mighty Mississippi River. But before one can cross it from the west he must first cross another little bridge over a creek. If he refuses to drive across the first he has no access to the second. It is this way with the kingdom of heaven. I become worthy to approach God by appreciating the worth of my brethren to me— and to God!

3. Jesus recognized that man was not made for religion, but religion was made for man, and the ultimate expression of religion is doing good for needy mankind. One sabbath while they were going through the grainfields, the disciples plucked off heads of grain, rubbed off the husks between their palms, blew away the chaff, and ate the grain. The sharp-eyed Pharisees immediately called to the attention of Jesus that His followers were doing what was not lawful on the sabbath. Here was a clearcut confrontation between law and human hunger, between a statute and starvation.

Jesus went to the very heart of the matter. He did not cavil about the existence of the law. He did not argue the validity of their interpretation. He did not engage in a long-winded wrangle

to show that they were guilty of like infractions. Instead he pointed to the attitude of David when he was being hounded by Saul. Here was one who was universally honored. He was the first king of the house of Judah. Jesus recalled that when David "was in need and was hungry" he entered the very precincts of the house of God and there ate the bread of the Presence, *which it was not lawful* **for any but the priests to eat.**

This teaching was revolutionary to the legalistic sticklers of that day. All legalism sacrifices human need to ceremonial observance. The life, and even the soul of a man is worthless compared to "obeying the letter of the law." Let the law be upheld at all costs, regardless of human suffering or inner turmoil. Men are but machines, mere robots to perform stated acts. A good illustration in our own days is that of a preacher who was speaking to a rural congregation in Arkansas about the imperative of coming every Sunday to share in the communion of the Lord's Table. He declared that nothing must ever interfere with the attempt to attend "every time the doors are opened." He declared that if his doctor forbade him to go on Sunday morning, he would get up and dress and walk as far toward the meetinghouse as possible, then he would crawl as long as he could, and if he died he would expire with his right hand stretched out toward what he mistakenly referred to as "the house of God."

Such absurd reasoning was directly contradicted by Jesus when He declared, "The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath." The goal of the revealed faith is not to increase one's already heavy burdens. It is to develop one in all of his faculties and potentials to the highest possible level. It is to encourage and assist him in the arrival at that place where his personality fulfils the divine responsibility which is his to bear. When religion becomes destructive of the finer virtues, when it engenders hatred, animosity and carping criticism, when it drives apart those who claim to love Jesus, instead of drawing them closer together, it is prostituted to the baser elements of

our earthbound existence.

It is a sad error to mistake being loyal to a party or to partisan traditions with being loyal to Jesus and the ideals which He espoused and for which He died. It is possible that nothing else in our day so stands in the way of genuine Christian living as sectarian prejudice. It places a blind-fold over the mind shutting out the light of truth. It acts as a shackle for the heart making further progress impossible. We need men who will rise above narrow concepts of brotherhood and restore to our aching hearts the real Jesus, in all the glory and majesty of that divine love which sent him to an unworthy world filled with sinners.

4. Jesus intimated that the ability to love may be in proportion to a recognition of the need for forgiveness. One who feels he is so good that he requires little mercy from God will have but meager compassion for others. Such a person lavishes all his love upon himself and has but a small surplus to share with anyone else. George Herbert, the English poet, who died in 1633, wrote: "He that cannot forgive others, breaks the bridge over which he himself must pass if he would ever reach heaven; for every one has need to be forgiven."

One of the most touching things in the life of Jesus on earth occurred one day when he was the guest of a prominent Pharisee. The table was surrounded with a select group of diners when someone conveyed the news to a streetwalker that Jesus was in the house. She edged her way through the door carrying an alabaster flask of ointment and came quickly to the place where Jesus reclined while partaking of the feast. Weeping copiously, her tears fell upon the feet of Jesus, whereupon she used her long hair as a towel and dried them, after which she stooped and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the costly perfume.

The host was astounded, but said nothing aloud. Instead he spoke to himself, "This man cannot be a prophet for if he were

he would know who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, and he would never have allowed a prostitute to touch him, let alone kissing his feet." Jesus understood what he was saying as if he had produced audible words, for the record says that Jesus answered him. His answer was a story, "Simon, a certain creditor had two debtors; one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. When they could not pay, he forgave them both. Now which one of them will love him more?" The Pharisee replied, "I suppose the one to whom he forgave more." Jesus replied, "You answered correctly."

Then, after mentioning how remiss the Pharisee had been in common courtesy, Jesus said, "I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little." If we would develop a love to share we must begin with a sense of our own need. He who comes short of recognizing his own shortcomings will come up short in bestowing love. Regardless of the gravity of our sins if we come to Jesus in loving compassion He may say to us as He did to the griefstricken harlot, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace." What an adventure came to her that day in such hostile surroundings.

Tuning In and Turning On

Contents

When Richard M. Nixon was preparing to visit China during his abbreviated term as president a great deal was at stake. There had been no diplomatic relations with this Communist country for many years. It became necessary for the president to brief himself as thoroughly as possible on all of the political ramifications involved, as well as to take a "cram course" on Chinese customs and etiquette. Even a slight mistake by our head of state might be regarded as a reflection against the Chinese. Information bulletins were prepared by experts in Oriental thought, and the president read them avidly.

Now suppose you became very serious about your role as the representative of the heavenly head of state in this alien world where you have been dispatched as a foreigner and pilgrim. You realize that your behavior is being observed by spies of "the prince of this world" and that any thoughtless utterance or unscrupulous act will be used, not only to hurt your personal reputation but as a reflection against Him who has sent you as His emissary. Even your life may be at stake. So you go to experts who have spent years in the service of the Sovereign and have carefully studied His declarations and instructions and ask if there is a brief summary which puts the whole thing in succinct form.

In all probability they would unanimously suggest that you read what is popularly designated the "Sermon on the Mount." This may be a misnomer. The word sermon does not appear in

the Bible. Origen has been called "the father of the sermon" and he was not born until about 185 A.D. When we hear the word "sermon" we conjure up a mental image of a man trained in the art of homiletics standing behind a rostrum on a raised platform. But Jesus simply sat down on a rocky hillside and shared with people. He was "the Way, the Truth and the Life" and what the "Way-shower" shared was truth and life. There is some evidence that the people in our day have been preached to death instead of taught how to live.

Frequently we leave a "religious service" today unchanged and unaffected. A great deal of that may be our fault. We have been taught to be present at such events as an obligation to God. We attend as a kind of duty and when we have discharged that duty we go home and resume our routine. We have "paid our debt to society" and we are free from interference for another week. A junior High school class was discussing heaven when a boy raised his hand and asked, "Will we have to go to church when we get to heaven?" The teacher replied, "No, that will all be over!" "Hey," the kid said, "I'll bet that's what makes it heaven."

There's no use of denying that "going to church" is a drag for a lot of people. It is something to be endured and not to be enjoyed. I know a scientist who says that the only way he can hang on is to switch his mind to another channel when the preacher gets up to speak. It was not that way with Jesus in his open air address. When He concluded the people were astonished at his teaching. They compared it to that with which they were accustomed in the synagogue and concluded there was an air of authority about it which they had never seen demonstrated by any other teacher.

Nineteen hundred years have faded into the gray haze of history since that day but people are still astonished by what Jesus said. Books have been written about it. Classes have studied it meticulously. Sermons have been preached on its

content. It is inexhaustible. The past generations have not wrung it dry. Ours will not do so either. The air of authority still clings to it. It is not an authority enforced by smoking cannon, or by what Kipling calls "reeking tube and iron shard." It is not an authority of stern looks or jutting jaw. It is not "cracking the whip." It is the pervasive authority of truth and life. With Jesus these were not just ideas to be discussed. They constituted not so much an exposition of His thinking as an exposure of His being.

Tradition has it that the mountain on which Jesus spoke was the one called Horns of Hattin, not very far from Capernaum. For centuries it has been designated "Mount of the Beatitudes." No one can be certain of the site and it is just as well. Each one of us must toil up his own slope to sit at the feet of Jesus. For some it will be a steep and toilsome trip up the side of a mountain of sorrow, or of frustration, or of disappointment and clutching fear. It is never the mount of blessing going up. It is only after Jesus speaks that it becomes so. When the disciples walked up the mountain it was the Horns of Hattin. It was as they were coming down they realized it was the mount of blessing.

I have been in a lot of public speaking classes. In every one of them there comes a time when you consider the construction of an effective speech. A good deal of discussion centers around the introduction. You are taught that you must secure the attention of your listeners. You must strike a match before you can build a fire. Jesus ignored all of the attention getters. He did not thank the people for their presence. That would have been too much like a shepherd thanking the sheep for gathering around the feed trough. He did not express appreciation for their willingness to travel such a distance. That would have been like thanking the hardy men who gathered at Sutler's Fort, near Sacramento, in 1849, as part of the gold rush. It is natural for people to go a long way in spite of suffering and privation when treasure awaits. I'm glad that Jesus did not open with the latest "preacher's joke."

He began sharing with the word "blessed" and repeated it eight more times. The first nine sentences begin with this word. That is why these statements are called "the beatitudes" from the Latin original which means consummate bliss. It is not my intention here to analyze the various kinds of persons who are said to be blessed the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers and the persecuted. Other writers with far more ability than I will ever possess have already done that many times. I am indebted to them. Such writers do not create the fountain of truth but they do graciously provide cups so the rest of us can drink.

I do want to say a little about the original for the word "blessed." It is *makarios,* **and it appears 49 times in the new covenant scriptures. In the Authorized Version it is rendered blessed 43 times and happy 6 times. Like so many Greek terms it is difficult for us to find an exact equivalent for it in modern English. It will help us to remember that this was the word used to describe the gods who were conceived of as dwelling in palaces of dazzling splendor far removed from all of the problems and pains to which the dwellers in the flesh were subject. To those who were favored by the gods** *makarios* **was granted. It was not something one earned or deserved. It was a gift from on high, a sharing of the life of the deities.**

Jesus was the only real authority on sharing the life of God who ever lived on earth. He did not descend from the brow of fabled Olympus peopled with imaginary gods and goddesses, but from heaven itself. He had shared the life of the one true and living God. He could say, "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (John 17:5). When Jesus used the word *makarios* **as a sharing in the bliss which God alone could bestow He was speaking of something which He experienced, and which is now made available unto peacemakers and persecuted ones.**

Several years ago someone sent me a little paperback book with the title "The Secret of Happiness." Since that is a secret which all of us would like to discover I read the book through in one sitting. The author was an excellent writer and what he wrote interested me. The book was an exposition of the beatitudes and it was done in a refreshing way. One should be careful of criticizing the literary efforts of others, especially when his own are often mediocre, but I want to question the use of "happiness" as a rendering of *makarios.*

I have already mentioned that the Authorized Version uses the word "happy" six times. Apparently the sober scholars appointed by King James felt that it would be more appropriate to the context in other places. A good many modern translations use "happy" instead of "blessed" throughout the preamble of the talk by Jesus. A good example is the *Good News Bible.* **One reason for that may be that everyone is "gung-ho" for happiness but few are searching for a blessing. We have swung so far that sometimes we employ the latter in exactly the opposite sense. When I asked a distraught mother what she did when her little ragamuffin tramped through her kitchen leaving a muddy trail to mark his progress to the bathroom, she replied, "I gave him a good shaking and blessed him out!" That hardly indicates a happy state of affairs.**

There is a lot of shallow thinking about happiness in our day. I recently read on a card, "The five secrets of happiness are money, money, money, money, money." But it is not our reduction of the depth of the word which makes me doubt its validity as a translation of *makarios.* **"The word happiness comes from the root** *hap* **which means chance, or luck. There was no element of chance in the term Jesus employed. It was not dependent upon the smile of "Lady Luck" the patron saint of gamblers.**

Happiness, as we use the term, is too greatly affected by external circumstances. If there is a fortuitous concourse of

things, if they all come together, they bring happiness. If everything seems to go wrong or fall apart we are not happy and we show it. On a box of cake mix produced by a famous flour manufacturer appears the statement, "All ingredients included!" That is true of *makarios.* It contains all the elements of joy in itself. They constitute its essence.

The special brand of bliss which is God's gift to us is described by William Barclay as "serene, untouchable, and self-contained." It is the lot of those whom men revile, persecute, and against whom they say all manner of evil falsely, for the sake of Jesus. Such victims of "man's inhumanity to man" are actually told to rejoice and be exceeding glad. I never read this that I do not think of Hugh Latimer and Nicholas Ridley who were burned at the stake in 1555, during the reign of Mary Tudor, sometimes called "Bloody Mary." When the two were tied to their stakes with the faggots heaped about their feet, Latimer looked over at his companion and said, "Be of good cheer, Master Ridley, we shall this day kindle a fire in England which shall not be put out." Be of good cheer while waiting for the fire to sear your flesh!

What an adventure of the spirit to place oneself in such a state as to prepare himself for the kind of bliss which is unaffected by false accusation, cruel suffering, or impending death. I once knew a man who craved righteousness with such hunger and thirst that his friends and relatives thought he was a fanatic. They warned me against him and said, "Don't pay any attention to him. He's off in the upper story and reads the Bible and prays all of the time." I found him a gentle soul, harmless and undefiled. He was a vegetarian and would eat no animal flesh because he did not want something to be slaughtered so he could live.

He appeared oblivious of the slights of those about him. He prayed for his neighbors by name every night. If he forgot one of them, he would say "Father, I think I overlooked George, but I

did not intend to do so. Please include him also." One day he became violently ill and when he was discovered lying in the yard he was taken to the hospital. I visited him there the day before he died. He said to me, "I'm not afraid to go. I've got my reservation. I will have my hunger satisfied and my thirst quenched. I'll be filled just like He promised."

It has always been interesting to me that immediately after Jesus finished His comments about the bliss of those who are tuned in to God's purpose in the world. He told us what His followers were. He used two illustrations. Both of them relate to things which we merely take for granted and seldom think about. We could not live without them but we accept them, often without a second thought. The first is salt. Jesus did not say that His followers ought to be salt or should be. He said "You are the salt of the earth." Salt is not something you try to become in Christ. It is what you are in Christ.

In the illustrations Jesus used there was always a relationship between the things employed and that which they were intended to portray. We can conclude that salt possessed certain characteristics attributed to the disciples. It will help us to list a few of them.

1. Salt was *precious* in the days of Jesus. This may be hard for us to realize when we can go to the market and buy a sizeable box of the refined product for a matter of a few cents. The former value of it can be at least partially understood when we remember that our word salary literally means "payment in salt." It is derived from the fact that included in the payment of a Roman soldier was a salt allowance. To this day we say of one who does not measure up that "he is not worth his salt." One of our highest tributes to a person is to say he is "the salt of the earth."

So precious was salt to our pioneers they often risked death from Indians by going to a salt spring or lick, where they

camped out for days while boiling the water in huge kettles to evaporate it away and leave the grayish deposit of crystals in the bottom of the vat. It will help us to realize that God called us unto Himself because we are precious unto Him. In fact, it could be said of us as it was of Israel, in the days of old, "You are precious in my eyes, and honored, and I love you" (Isaiah 43:4). If we are so valuable in the sight of our Creator we ought never to cheapen ourselves, or take ourselves lightly.

2. Salt was the best *preservative* **known in the time of Jesus. Sometimes when a corpse was to be transported a long distance by the slow methods of transportation then available it was packed in salt. It was this quality, no doubt, which caused covenants or compacts which were to be enduring, to be ratified by the parties involved eating salt together. The covenant made between God and Israel was such a covenant and salt had to accompany every cereal offering as a token of it. "You shall season all your cereal offerings with salt; you shall not let the salt of the covenant with your God be lacking from your cereal offering; with all your offerings you shall offer salt" (Leviticus 2:13). In 2 Chronicles 13:5 it is said that God gave the kingship over Israel for ever to David and his sons by a covenant of salt. As the maker of that covenant God would protect and preserve it.**

Those of our readers who grew up in a rural setting in an earlier day when farmers slaughtered their own animals for the family larder know how important salt was. The meat was packed in salt which it absorbed, then taken out and smoked over a slow fire of hickory, sassafras, or some other aromatic wood.

The righteous are the ones who preserve the earth. In the days of Noah the wickedness of man became so great that God resolved to destroy him from the face of the earth. God withdrew the salt from the mass of corruption in order to preserve life and eight souls stood between life and extinction.

Noah and his family were the salt of the earth. Ten righteous souls would have preserved Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim from the desolation wrought upon them by fire rained down from heaven.

It is the righteousness of the few and not the profligacy of the many which keeps families and nations from being blotted out. It is for this reason the "salt" should never become discouraged. Salt does not make a lot of noise. It does not whip up a lot of excitement. It works quietly, gently, but effectively, and it preserves our culture from further decay and disintegration.

3. Salt was a *purifying* agent in the days of Jesus. W. E. Vine writes, "In the Lord's teaching it is also symbolic of that spiritual health and vigor essential to Christian virtue and counteractive of the corruption that is in the world." It was believed to possess antiseptic qualities and when a soldier received a spear wound the hole in the flesh was often tamped full of salt to prevent infection.

The Jews may have come to think of salt as a therapeutic prescription because of an incident in the life of Elisha while he was at Jericho. The men of the place came to him and pointed out that the city was an attractive place to live except for the fact the land was unproductive and the spring which furnished water was dangerous. The implication is that they credited the water with the death of some individuals and with causing abortions. Elisha asked them to put salt in a bowl and bring it to him. After throwing the salt in the spring he told them the Lord declared the water would not again cause death or miscarriages. The chronicler adds, "And that water has been pure ever since, just as Elisha said it would be" (2 Kings 2:22).

Every disciple who has not lost his saltness has experienced how his presence helps to purify conditions. I was in a state on the west coast when I was invited to talk at a Bible Club meeting

at a community high school. Because the administration would not consent to a meeting during regular school hours these young people had to meet at 6:30 o'clock in the morning. I went expecting to find a dozen sleepy-eyed persons. I was surprised to find more than a hundred gathered in the music room engaged in singing lively choruses. I heard them pray for their school, the teachers and the students out of Christ. Later, when I talked to the mayor and chief of police they told me that the group had such an impact that teen-age crime and vandalism had been reduced to the vanishing point. The salt had purified the area.

A young girl who became a committed follower of Jesus Christ became aware of how the language of her fellow-workers in a restaurant was purged by her presence. At first she endured a great deal of jesting and subtle ridicule. Gradually this ceased and when it became obvious that she was seriously in earnest the obscene and suggestive language halted.

4. Salt increased the *palatability* of food. All of us have eaten attractively prepared food in which the cook had forgotten to put salt. It tastes flat and insipid. We feel a sense of compassion for one who has to be on a salt-free diet. Life without the Christian influence is also flat. I know a man who dreads to see Sunday come. He says that it gives him a first-class case of "the blahs." It seems like the longest day in the week. He is glad when it is over and he can get back to work. I do not share his feeling. Sunday is a great day for me. It is a time of spiritual uplift and rich blessing. To be able to gather in remembrance of one's dearest friend with others who also know Him, is a tremendous experience. Of course the edge is taken off when liturgy and formality kill the spark of spontaneity, but even then one can return home with his inner feelings aroused and his heart beating a little faster.

Sometimes life becomes a little hard and difficult. One may suffer loss, or become frustrated and despondent. But if he knows Jesus, the Holy Spirit dwells in his heart for just such

emergencies. I am acquainted with a man who says prayer is "opening up the valve." He lives in an older house which is heated with hot water radiators. When the temperature becomes noticeably chill he opens up the valve a little and soon the room is comfortable. In the same way when his spiritual life cools off he intercedes with God in prayer and he is soon circulating warmth to others. It is easier to bear suffering if one comes in contact with God's salt.

It bothers a great many people that Christians seem to have so little influence upon the world in general. Sin continues unabated. Crime statistics are often frightening. Vice stalks the streets with brazen indifference. Why does the salt have so little impact? There is no simple answer. But it must not be forgotten that salt will do no good while huddling in the shaker. And a great many in our day are trapped inside of religious structures. Here they hold services rather than rendering them. They carry on religious exercises while the world is dying at the doorstep. Lewis Mumford in *Faith for Living* **calls the institutionalized forms of religion "a mere husk of habit." The salt needs to be shaken out of its complacency and apathy.**

Jesus speaks of salt that is tasteless because it has lost its saltness. He declares it is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trodden underfoot by man. In his book *New Light on the Gospels,* **Clifford A. Wilson says it was a Jewish tradition that when salt became unfit for use on sacrifices it was sprinkled upon the temple steps in rainy weather to keep the priests from slipping. William Barclay refers to a statement in the book** *Jesus of Palestine* **by E. F. F. Bishop in which it is said that a thick bed of salt was placed in the outdoor clay ovens to retain the heat of the stones for baking. When it was no longer fit it was dragged out and thrown on the roadway.**

It is not enough for Jesus to say, "You are the salt of the earth." The expression has become so commonplace we can mouth it utterly unconscious of any responsibility to the salt we

talk about. I must say "I *am* the salt of the earth" and you must do the same. Then we must begin to act like salt, searching out areas of need where we can supply what is lacking. It is up to those of us who are disciples. No other provision has been made. Jesus does not say "If the salt has lost its strength, I shall have to try something else!" There is nothing else! It is you or nothing! If you fail the question is "With what shall the earth be salted?" The answer is that it will not be. You are the last divine thrust into the world! Jesus was the Son of God made flesh. You are flesh made a son of God.

We must not terminate our little study without paying attention to the statement "You are the light of the world." Someone has pointed out that this may well be the greatest compliment Jesus ever paid to man. In it we are called to be what He was. In our day of well-lighted homes, offices, parking lots and highways, it is almost impossible for us to imagine the kind of world through which Jesus walked at night. Nothing was a greater blessing than light.

The Authorized Version uses the word "candle" but this is incorrect. The art of candlemaking had not yet developed. Archbishop Trench in his *Synonyms of the New Testament* points out that the original Greek word *luchnos* is not a candle but "a handlamp fed with oil." Such lamps were made of clay moulded to shape. Sometimes a half of an oyster shell was drafted into use. In an emergency, a potsherd picked up at the village well or town garbage dump might be pressed into service. The depression was filled with olive oil and a wick of twisted cloth inserted into it and lighted. Such a lamp was placed upon a stand so the light would be diffused at a greater radius.

Because of its great value light became the subject of poetry and song. In many areas of paganism it was worshiped. One thing was obvious. A light could not kindle itself. It had to be started by a power outside of and beyond itself. Mythology attributed the origin of fire and light to the gods. When Jesus

came to assert that His disciples were the light of the world. He was aware of the almost superstitious respect for light. He knew they had not kindled the light by their own goodness. He was "the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." The glory for their light belonged to the Father of lights. The lamps were mere vessels to bear the light.

It is all very well for us to talk about being modest and retiring but we must not use these terms to justify concealment of the light. A light that is not seen is not a light. Nothing stands out at night more than a city which is set on an elevated plateau. Anyone who has driven across the western plains country at night knows how far a city can be seen and how many miles must be driven before the environs are reached. God does not intend for us to cower in the shadows.

The greatest fear in primitive times was that the lamp would become extinguished. The invention of phosphorus matches which could be ignited with friction, by the English chemist John Walker, in 1827, took away that concern. Now every restaurant of note has books of safety matches as free promotional material. But in the days of Jesus when the family was to be away from the house for a little while the lamp was taken from its stand and placed on the floor where a meal tub (as the New English Version has it) was turned upside down over it. This protected the lamp from a draft of wind if the door was opened.

When the family was present and needed light no one would think of putting a basket or other container over it. The point of Jesus is that the world is desperately in need of light and it is no time to obscure or conceal ours under a thousand things which would render our testimony ineffective. We need to investigate everything with which we find ourselves becoming involved or preoccupied. It could be that Satan has planted a "meal tub" in our way.

It is a rather common thing to see those who stand alone in dark places become discouraged because one light seems so inconsequential in the immensity of the enshrouding darkness. Such lack of faith is hardly justifiable. If the light goes out the scope and intensity of the darkness is but intensified. If the light is kept burning it may be used to kindle others. Recently I was present in an audience of more than four hundred persons, each of whom had a small candle at his plate at the banquet table. At a given signal all of the lights were turned off and Stygian blackness prevailed. The moderator lighted his candle and from it lighted one at the front table. The light was passed on from hand to hand until the hundreds of candles were burning and the darkness fell away. All of the light began with one tiny flame.

A light is simply expected to shine where it is without consideration of or concern for the darkness. No darkness can ever overcome light. It is as true of us as it was of Jesus. "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never put it out" (John 1:5. Today's English Version). One who is the light of the world can go into any situation with an absolute trust that victory is on his side. Darkness is helpless against light.

God made no provision for lamps that have burned themselves out. He did not conceive of a congregation of blackened wicks in the reflected glow of a professional "light." It was never the divine plan for lamps to contribute all of their oil to one big lamp which was expected to shine upon a house of empty ones. The fact is that every disciple is expected to have the power to ignite someone else. That we have to be "turned on" periodically or "fanned into flame" or "revived" annually is not an indication of our faith but of our lack of it. The gauge of the success of a revival is not the number of persons packed in for the body count at a special entertainment. It is simply that no other revival is ever needed.

The very word revival is a *dead* give away. It literally means to restore to consciousness or life, to reanimate. It is an

admission that someone is either unconscious or dead. Men trained in lifesaving techniques do not run around giving artificial respiration to healthy persons. To allow our lamps to go out or burn so low that we need to secure a lamp-lighter to come in and replenish the oil and trim the wicks is a reflection against the Father of lights. Satan has betrayed us into retreating from the scene on the ground that we are too weak and helpless to cope. It is time we rejected that spirit of defeatism once and for all.

No Place to Flee

Contents

I have a friend who realized a long-time ambition a few years ago. He had always wanted to own and personally manage a small motel. When he retired at the age of sixty, after forty years of employment with one company, he and his wife began to travel throughout the United States. One evening they came to his "dream castle," a thirty-six unit motel nestled against the base of a mountain in one of our western states. After staying all night in one of the comfortable rooms he began negotiations early the next morning with a view to purchasing the place. Before the day ended he had bought it and it has proven to be a successful venture.

This man is a dedicated student of the Bible. He never retires at night without reading the Book. The result is that he tends to think in Bible terms. His comparisons are often Biblically based. Not long ago he told me he thought Bible students could be described in the same three categories in which he mentally thinks of his guests. The latter he thinks of as rock-hounds, vista-viewers, and tourists.

Rock-hounds stay in his accommodations because they are in search of semi-precious stones which they can polish and sell or add to a private collection. Each morning they head out to a nearby lode and dig out pebbles which they examine meticulously to determine their constituency and value. Vista-viewers are not interested in such a concentrated study. They climb to vantage points from which they can look at faraway

peaks or see the beauty of a wide sweep of country.

Tourists are simply on a trip through the area. Those who are independent quickly survey the terrain and go on their way, satisfied that they have logged another area in their record. Those who are on a group tour are shepherded by a guide who takes them to the right places, gives his formal spiel and gets them all back on the chartered bus to journey on to the next scheduled stop.

There are Bible "rock-hounds" who search for interesting and unique words in the treasure trove of scripture. They dig deep and uncover some rare gems. Nothing is more fascinating than a study of the derivation and history of words. I am intrigued when I sit down with *A Theological Word Book of the Bible* **by Alan Richardson, or pick up my copy of** *New Testament Words* **by William Barclay. These men pry loose from their moorings truths previously hidden from my sight. They provide new insights upon the language of the Holy Spirit. As one eminent writer has put it, words are "fossil poetry."**

Not every person is adapted to the discipline of such investigative exercise. Sometimes their mental muscles are too weak and flabby to permit digging beneath the surface. They like to view the mountain peaks of sacred history as part of a great panorama. The creation of man, the flood of Noah, the call of Abraham, the life of Moses— all of these themes are attractive and they focus their view upon them. Their interest leads them to list persons and events important to God's unfolding purpose, but they are not really researchists.

The tourists travel through the Book, often at a certain rate per day. Like one who calculates his mileage before he leaves home on vacation they cover so many chapters each week, pausing only briefly to survey the items of interest. Their chief aim is to say they have been there when someone mentions a spot, whether it means anything to them or not. Those who are

on a conducted tour simply go where a preacher or teacher takes them with an itinerary furnished in advance. They listen to the description or explanation and move on to the next location.

I am not sure that those of us who are thinking together in reading this book can conveniently be filed away in one of the three pigeon-holes dreamed up by my friend. There is a temptation to linger with the "Sermon on the Mount" and probe into every aspect of it, but that is not our real purpose. We are rather on a journey to discover the adventure involved in attuning our hearts to a divine dimension which will make it possible to share a transcendent experience above and beyond the fleshly or sensual plane.

This requires a familiarization with Jesus as a person, living in the same kind of environment with which we must cope, until freed from it by the experience we call death. Jesus did not enter the earthly sphere to live in a kind of splendid isolation or to become a glorified hermit. He built no monastic retreat upon Mount Hermon. He did not dwell in a cave as a bearded recluse. He had no wilderness sanctuary to which He could retire "far from the madding throng's ignoble strife."

As the village carpenter whose ox-yokes rested easy upon the necks of draft animals and made their burdens lighter, He was subjected to the haggling over prices which is so much a part of trading in the East. He became a part of the pushing, shoving, gesticulating crowd which congregated along the gravel-strewn beaches of the Sea of Galilee. In the temple precincts He was carried along by the ocean of humanity which surged about the outer court on days of special sacrifice. He walked the narrow streets of Jerusalem and the dusty roads leading to villages, stepping out of the way to allow laden asses to pass while their cursing drivers screamed at both their animals and the pedestrians who blocked their way.

His ears were assailed with the crude and obscene jokes of

a peasantry which had no other means of expressing its seething hostility against its Roman overlords. His eyes saw the graffiti scrawled upon the walls of the narrow alleys used as public latrines. In the markets he heard the babble of voices, the shrill cries of hawkers directing attention to their wares, the whining call of the beggars and the blind, the varied accents of a polyglot population which turned the city of God into a city of man, invading the holy place with tables of moneychangers and crates of cooing doves and pigeons.

How did one who knew no sin move into such a world of political intrigue, conspiracy and hostility, and relate to its desperate need? How can I, having known sin and still knowing it, live in such a world and profess to be a follower of Him? He moved among men unscathed and unscarred, but I already bear the scars of my departures from my own ideals, the frightful marks of my indiscretions and wrong decisions.

The dilemma revealed in such questions has caused many to flee from the marketplace to desert fastnesses to "get away from it all." Like the ancient Essenes, religious "orders" have established communes of "the faithful" upon the summit of high mountains or in remote valleys where the sun never shines. In an attempt to serve Him in the world man seeks to build heavens of his own into which he can go and leave the world, in direct opposition to Him who left the heaven which God constructed to come into the world.

I am convinced there is no place to flee. If I am to be like Jesus I must stay and face whatever the world and the flesh throw at me. I must mingle with the multitude in all of the raw, bloody godlessness of an earth which walks in darkness and despair. God has created no "green belt," no suburban area around the earth for my comfortable existence while mankind gasps for breath, and struggles for survival. I must be in the world but not of it. The temptation is to be both in it and of it. But that is not the way of adventure! Anyone can do that and

most persons do!

It is evident that Jesus often ignored and frequently upset the sense of values which the world had developed. As we have previously mentioned, He established a whole new set of priorities. He set precedents which those about Him regarded as dangerous. He rocked the boat. He made waves. As a result I am forced to decide whether I will go along with the comfortable position which the world has evolved, or practice the life-style of Jesus as nearly as I can. I cannot do both. "For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you would." So says Paul in Galatians 5:17. Let me suggest a few things in which Jesus cut across the thinking of men while He was upon the earth. We can consider but a mere sample of His teaching in this area.

THE NEW DYNAMIC

1. Jesus taught that love must be unrestricted and unconfined. It must be outreaching enough to include enemies as well as friends, a love for mankind, not just a certain kind of man. It is not something which can be held within but must be openly expressed, for love unexpressed is not really love at all. This kind of teaching must have been like a bolt of lightning to the hearers of Jesus. It cut across all they had previously been taught.

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy'" This precept enjoins both hate and love, not for things but for persons who are made in the image of God. But hate is a consuming fire. It is destructive. It is like carrying a venomous snake in one's bosom. One of the big problems raised by this adage of the ancients is the problem of deciding whether another is a neighbor or enemy so one will not mistakenly waste love or hate on the wrong one.

Jesus wiped out the need of making such distinctions. He threw hate on the refuse dump as no longer necessary for His disciples to lug around inside themselves. "But I say to you. Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." I think that for years I rather ignored this, hoping it was not real or would go away. When I could no longer avoid it I tried to dilute it, to weaken it so that I could swallow it, like dissolving an aspirin in a glass of water to keep it from lodging in the throat and choking you. Finally, when a growing sense of relationship to Jesus forced me to reckon honestly with everything He said I began to study this remarkable statement. I learned a great deal which has been of inestimable value to me, and if I can do so without seeming pushy, I'd like to share a few of the things I found out, with you.

The word for love is *agape.* **It is one of four Greek words which have been rendered by our English term love, but it represents a special kind of love. It is not the kind of love one has for his wife, or children, or grandchildren. It is not the kind of love that he feels toward his country, the land of his birth. Involved in love for these is a combination of sentimentality and emotion which seems to be an integral part of our very being as humans. It is built into us. Since it represents a natural relationship we think of those who have no regard for their own parents or children as "acting contrary to nature."**

But love for one's enemies is not natural. We stay aloof from our enemies. We regard them with suspicion and fear. We cannot apply to them the same sentimental affection which we feel toward our own flesh and blood. However, love for enemies is not unnatural, it is supernatural. When one becomes a partaker of the divine nature it becomes natural in that realm to love his enemies. I seriously doubt that any person who has been merely born of the flesh can ever truly love his enemies. To do this one must be born of the Spirit. *Agape* **is a fruit of the Spirit. It is really a first-fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). It is borne in those who belong to Christ Jesus and have crucified the flesh**

with its passions and desires.

Agape **is God's love, the love that God is (1 John 4:8). If we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ "God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us" (Romans 5:5). We thus become containers of God's love and conduits through which that love flows to others. God never forces one to act against his will. He supplies for us the necessary ingredient for conquering self and the world but does not compel us to use it. In the final analysis, love for one's enemies is an act of will.**

I do not need to will to love my children or my dear friends. My love for them is spontaneous. I may require instruction as to how better to express my love toward them, or encouragement in the proper response to make to their expression of love for me. But I am commanded to love my enemies even as I am commanded to love my brothers in Christ. This means that I must love some persons whom I cannot like. To say this is to spark an instantaneous question in the minds of many. "How can I love a person whom I cannot like?"

The answer lies in the nature of *agape.* **We like people who are like us. The reason we do so is because it flatters us. Surely one who has the same tastes, the same hobbies, and the same style as ourselves must be something special. Even though our love for such persons may be shallow, being based upon human traits, it comes easily, being in reality a love for self. Love for our enemies, or even for God's other children who are wholly unlike us is another matter. Often it must be love for the loveless. God did not love us because we were good, but we are good because He loved us. Such love does not seek for value in its object, but creates it.**

The one who is loved may be vile and worthless by every social and moral standard but the fact that he is loved gives him worth. ***Agape*** **is active and beneficent goodwill which stops at**

nothing to achieve the good of the beloved object. In the case of Jesus it took Him as far as the cross. In a happy phrase, William Barclay designates it as "unconquerable benevolence." To love one's enemies is to wish only good for them, and actually labor to make that wish become reality.

Albert Barnes, who completed his commentary on the new testament scriptures at Philadelphia in 1832, wrote of the words of Jesus: "We are bound to love our enemies. This is a law of Christianity, original and peculiar. No system but this has required it, and no act of Christian piety is more difficult." Apparently his contemplation of the profundity of this statement of Jesus caused the commentator to open the floodgate of eloquence. He went on to write, "This is religion, beautiful as its native skies; pure like its Source; kind like its Author; fresh like the dews of the morning; clear and diffusive like the beams of the rising sun; and holy like the feelings and words that come from the bosom of the Son of God. He that can do this need not doubt that he is a Christian. He has caught the very spirit of the Saviour, and he must inherit eternal life."

This love is not passive, but active. It is not enough to endure persecution or to be patient under it. Jesus actually requires that we pray for those who persecute us. He gave an example of what He meant while suspended upon the cross. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Perhaps there is no more liberating experience in life than to gain the victory over self and to overcome a passion for vengeance and actually place one who deeply offends you in the hands of God. It may be a supreme triumph in some cases, freeing the persecuted from seething resentment which takes a greater toll of the one who suffers injury than of those who inflict it.

God is indiscriminate in the sharing of nature's blessings. He does not ordinarily send rain only upon those who are just and equitable. It falls upon the unjust as well as the just. The sun rises upon both the evil and the good. One who wishes to be

identified with the Father, that is, who wants to be recognized as a partaker of the divine nature, must in this respect be perfect as the heavenly Father is perfect. The word perfect here does not relate to knowledge, moral character— or sinlessness. It means mature or complete. It is used here to show that we must not be selective in the bestowal of love or blessings.

More is expected of one who reveres God than of one who does not. Men who limit their expression of love, compassion and concern only to those who belong to a caste, clique or company, are motivated by selfishness rather than selflessness. There is no regard from God to those who thus act. "For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you salute only your brethren, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles the same?" When Jesus uttered these words, tax collectors were regarded as social outcasts, guilty of national betrayal and treason because they hired out to the occupation forces to exact taxation from their own people. Gentiles were generally looked upon as idolaters. Those who professed to be sons of God and acted no better than social outcasts and idolaters had nothing to commend them.

The words of Jesus about love provide for us a genuine yardstick for measuring the reality of our experience with Him. Each of us must be tested to determine the worthiness of our claim to be His disciple. I offer this suggestion. Select a person toward whom you have felt hostility and bitterness. Pray earnestly for the power to love that person regardless of any deep hurt he has inflicted upon you. Direct your will toward loving that one. Repeat to yourself over and over that you will conquer your hate. Insist to your own heart that you will love that person regardless of cost and continue to make yourself vulnerable until the burden of bitterness has been lifted from your heart.

You will find that your whole life has been changed for the

better. There will come a sense of lightness and freedom you have never known before. You will be singing in your soul. The feeling of perpetual weariness will pass away. Your nervous tension will pass away also. You will become conscious of being more than a conqueror through His love. What will really take place, of course, is that you will have a consciousness of being a child of God in a real identifiable sense. There is really no way for this to happen as long as you hate those who speak evil of you and persecute you. The striving for revenge will consume you.

THE EXCLUSIVE LOYALTY

2. Jesus taught that loyalty must be undivided and sincere. The real secret of eternal life in our present state is absolute commitment without any reservation. The ultimate freedom on earth is attained by surrendering to the lordship of Jesus. One who does not become a slave of His will becomes a slave to self. "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon" (Matthew 6:24).

This ultimatum says much and implies even more. Implied is the thought that every rational person on earth will be under a master. As a created being man can never go it alone. He can be only as free as the Creator made him to be. By nature man will always be dependent. Implied also is man's right to will and the power to do so. Although sin marred the original dignity of man it did not destroy his potential to choose. "He *will* hate the one and love the other." As a being man can will his own destiny. Thus he is capable of the Great Adventure.

Because of our English rendering of the two words "serve" and "master" we tend to lose some of the depth of what Jesus was saying. For example, we often speak of an apprentice *serving* under a *master* mechanic, but this does not convey the meaning

of Jesus. Words are a medium of exchange in the realm of thought as coins are in the realm of trade. As coins often lose some of their value when converted into the currency of other countries, so words sometimes suffer when translated into another language.

Difficult as it is, we must try to hear what Jesus said through the ears of those who sat before Him on the slopes of the Horns of Hattin. If we do we may get a different impression than that received by a group of well-dressed attendants sitting on cushioned pews in an air-conditioned religious structure in the twentieth century. The word which we have translated serve is from a Greek term for the lot of a slave. The word we have rendered master is a term for lord, and was the one used to designate a slave-owner. As it came through to His original listeners Jesus was saying that no one can belong to two owners.

Human slavery was an institution well understood in the days of Jesus. In our culture we have rejected and renounced it. It even seems incredible to us when we see it depicted upon the television screen or read a book like *Roots,* **by Alex Haley. But there were two features about slavery which must have flashed into the minds of the people who heard Jesus say what He did. First, the slave had no rights of his own. He did not belong to himself but to another. He could not be what he wished to be because he was wholly subject to the will of someone else.**

It is at this juncture we must be very careful. It is easy to allow prejudice to take over and prompt us to think of God as a self-seeking tyrant while regarding ourselves as degraded. Our mental conditioning regarding slavery can easily betray us into false conclusions. It is not uncommon to hear a university student, caught up in the false glamor of humanism, reject God with the words, "I do not want someone else running my life, whether I can see him or not." Such thinking shows a real ignorance of the nature of the overpowering love which attracts one to surrender himself in realization that by so doing he finds

his true self.

The identification of the human will in its weakness and limitations, with the sovereign creative will of the universe, is not degradation but exaltation. The mass of clay filled with impurities loses nothing but its own foreign matter when placed in the hands of a skilled potter to be made into a vessel "fit for the master's use." One cannot be under the power of two divergent wills at the same time and retain his sanity. He cannot serve two masters. To be wrenched and torn between conflicting desires and emotions can only result in a wreckage of personality. We either go with God or go to pieces!

The servant of Jesus is not brainwashed but heart-washed. His inner being is cleansed. He is purified. He is forgiven and made whole. One who is brainwashed cannot think straight. One who is heart-washed thinks straight for the first time. The brainwashed individual is programmed from without; the heart-washed individual is purged from within. He is led by the Spirit and cannot do the things that he would, the things to which he is prompted by the flesh. The mind that is in him is the mind of Christ.

Secondly, the slave has no time of his own. There is not a moment in which he is free from his owner. His plans are subject to the will of the master. He cannot take time off. He does not go in and out of his state. He has no time to devote to another. It is impossible for him to serve another master since all he is and has belongs to another.

The whole purpose of Jesus in emphasizing the exclusiveness of commitment to a master is to enforce the important dictum that one cannot serve both God and mammon. But what is "mammon"? *The New International Version* **uses the word "Money" with a capital initial letter, that is, as a personal noun.** *The New English Version* **follows suit. That is plain enough. One cannot be a slave of God if he is a slave of gold.**

I think we may accept this with one word of caution. In our day the word "money" may be a little too limited. The word "Mammon" related to a kindred word in Hebrew which signified something firm or solid, and thus, something which could be trusted as a foundation. The word trust seems to be woven into it. In its root significance it referred to material possessions which were entrusted to another to look after or care for. Eventually it underwent a change of emphasis and came to apply to the trust one placed in his material things.

Thus, the word once meant that which was placed in security or trust, and then came to mean that in which one placed his trust for security. Man comes to worship that to which he submits his life. If he trusts things or possessions as his shield against calamity and destruction these things will become his god. His life and time will be devoted to the accumulation of things, and such things will become his master. They will take precedence over every other value. He will sacrifice health, family and friends upon the altar of Mammon.

It is here that many tear their hearts to shreds. They try to trust in God and trust in material things at the same time. They are of all men most miserable, afraid on the one hand to turn loose of God, and fearful on the other hand of turning loose of things. When that which is created replaces and displaces the Creator in the shrine of the heart, only disappointment can result.

No doubt it was this which the ancient Greek myth about Midas, king of Phrygia, was intended to portray. As Thomas Bulfinch tells it in his *Age of Fable,* Bacchus, the god of wine, imbibed a little too freely and became lost. He was found by some peasants who brought him to the king. Midas entertained him royally for ten days and nights with all kinds of games and gaiety. On the eleventh day, when he was preparing to leave, Bacchus offered to implement any wish that Midas would make. The king immediately asked that whatever he touched be turned

to gold. The wish was granted. Midas was thrilled when he reached up to pluck an oak leaf and it turned to pure gold.

He stooped down and picked up a pebble. It became gold in his hand. He hastened to pick an apple from a fruit tree. It became like the fabled apples of Hesperides which Juno had received as a wedding present from the Earth-goddess. Midas hurried to his palace and ordered a sumptuous banquet prepared in celebration of his good fortune. But the bread hardened in his hand, the meat turned to metal between his teeth, and the wine flowed down his throat as liquid gold.

In the days that followed the wealthy monarch became desperate. The mattress at night became unyielding gold. He cringed from touching anything when he arose. Starving and desperate, he lifted up his hands to Bacchus and pleaded that the curse he had besought as a gift be removed. Mercifully, Bacchus told him to follow the Pactolus River to its headwaters and plunge his body into its cold depths and wash away his guilt. Midas came from the stream hating what he formerly loved. Divesting himself of his royal splendor he lived in the fields, basking in the natural beauty he had once defiled by converting it into gold.

You cannot serve both God and Mammon! Those who seek to do so make existence miserable for themselves and others. When life is regulated by the stock market and happiness and misery pursue each other as the quotations rise and fall, the relationships which count will be neglected or flung aside. When one can be "wiped out" by the frenzied manipulations of those he may never see, he dies a thousand deaths and never really lives at all. Rousseau said, "When a man dies he clutches in his hands only that which he gives away in his lifetime." D. H. Lawrence wrote, "When I wish I was rich, then I know I am ill."

Writing Your Own Ticket

Contents

It is an exciting thing to witness when faith works a complete transformation in the life of someone you know. When this happens there stands before you a living demonstration that the Spirit of God is active and energetic, converting the raw material of human existence into what J. B. Phillips calls "muscular Christianity." I want to tell you about a lovely and gracious woman whose life is a constant exemplification of understanding and compassion.

It was not always thus. She grew up in a family where her parents were suspicious of each other and of everyone else. In their conversation about the table they were always critical and judgmental of neighbors and relatives. Destructive gossip was the pastime and they indulged in it with a vengeance. Motives were always bad. Everything was negative. Few people visited the home although it was located in a friendly and hospitable neighborhood. The woman of whom I am writing told me that she could not recall one person in the neighborhood of whom her family had ever spoken a commendatory word.

She knew no other way of life and when she married she started to carry on as her mother did before her. However, her husband was of a different caliber. He told her one day he did not want to hear one detrimental thing said about others. He further said he preferred she not talk at all until she could find something to say about others that was good. It was like a slap in the face and she was furious. She refused to speak to her

husband for several days. Brooding and worried about the breakdown of communications with one whom she loved, she went to the minister of a nearby congregation and told him about her problem.

Fortunately, he pulled no punches but laid it on the line. He pointed out that her childhood home was devoid of faith in Jesus and thus the lives of her parents were empty. He told her that when people are starving they will eat anything and may even become cannibals. This is what had happened to her father and mother who were devouring one another and others because they were without Christ. They were starving for affection which they were unable to demonstrate. When she asked what she could do to keep from becoming like them he wrote her out a prescription consisting of three parts or ingredients.

Each day she was to read a chapter in one of the gospel records of the life of Jesus. As she did she was to underline every statement made by Jesus which seemed to condemn anything in her lifestyle and practice. Both morning and evening she was to pray in solitude for the help of the Holy Spirit in purging her heart of the carnal desire to think and speak evil of others. Each day she was to mentally select someone and concentrate on something good in that person's life. When possible she was to tell the individual about the good in his life. This consists of what Dr. George W. Crane calls "joining the compliment club."

Within a very few days a noticeable change started to take place. The woman began to be creative and considerate. In two months she was a changed individual. She told me that when she became aware of the grace and forgiveness of God she looked at those around her through different eyes. As she concentrated upon what Jesus said the Holy Spirit enabled her to put to death the works of the flesh. She is now in demand as a speaker at meetings and conventions of Christian women where she vibrantly relates what God will do for those who trust in Him.

I was especially impressed with one thing she told me. As she began to change her attitude toward others she noticed that life became easier for her. The low periods of depression began to disappear. The waters of life became calmer. As she learned to appreciate those around her there were fewer problems. Her physical health was improved as her mental state was altered. God began to measure out to her blessings which she had not previously known. She is now thoroughly convinced that you reap what you sow, and that some of the reaping takes place on earth. Suddenly she has sensed the real meaning of adventure in the Spirit!

Before I leave her case I want to mention that she told me she thought a lot of people were mumblers, bumblers or grumblers, and she realized that she started out in life to be a grumbler. She then took from her purse a card upon which she had written a scriptural quotation. It read: "Do not grumble, brethren against one another, that you may not be judged" (James 5:9). I suggested she ought to get a number of those printed and pass out to her friends and I felt like I might need one to carry in my pocket.

The book of Esther has always been one of the most interesting books in the old covenant scriptures to me. Admittedly, it reads more like a patriotic account than like a religious treatise, but it is a gripping story of how God rules and overrules in the plans of men. This is all the more intriguing because the name of God does not once appear in the text. It is a suspense story, a genuine "cliff-hanger," filled with action and with a surprise on every page. It is one of the greatest demonstrations of the working of divine providence ever put into print.

In this little volume is depicted the clever conspiracy of a jealous political hack to climb into prominence by the practice of genocide. Like Adolf Hitler he was so inflamed with the poison of anti-Semitism that he planned at a given signal to have all of

the Jews exterminated. One of the gripping features of the book is how every evil he planned for others ended up falling upon his own head. Finally, he ignominiously died swinging from the gallows he had erected upon which to hang a man of whom he was insanely jealous.

The principle of retribution in kind seemed so consistent to our pioneer ancestors they incorporated it in axioms and proverbs as they did every thought which they valued. They spoke of "chickens coming home to roost." They spoke of one being forced to eat out of his own spoon, or of being paid back in his own coin. When they saw someone besmirched in character who had sought to malign another they said he was tarred by his own brush. These homely little expressions referred to the just recompense visited upon one who tried to curry favor by trampling others down.

PLANTING THORNS

There is an Indian proverb which dates back some thirteen hundred years and which says, "He that plants thorns must never expect to gather roses." And there is a homely American story of a butcher who complained to a woman who sold him butter that each pound was about two ounces underweight. The woman explained this by telling him she had lost the one pound weight for her scales and had been balancing the butter against the pound of ground beef which she obtained from the butcher.

Jesus clearly taught that a man creates the standard by which he will be judged. We will be weighed in the scales which we use to weigh others. God will accept our own yardstick as the criterion by which we will be measured. "For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get." If your basis of judgment for your brothers is strict conformity to legalistic procedure and you deviate from that law in the slightest degree you sign your own

death warrant and seal your own doom. As an example, if you demand that others have the same degree of spiritual knowledge as yourself before you will receive them as children of God, then you must have the same degree of knowledge as God has before He will receive you as one of His children. This means that if you postulate fellowship with others upon attainment to a specific degree of knowledge, using your own knowledge as the basis, then you cannot be in fellowship with God until you attain to the degree of knowledge which He possesses. You will be damned, not because God desires to judge you thus, but because you chose that basis of judgment.

The way to assure that God will be lenient and merciful unto you is to be forbearing and forgiving toward your brethren. "Accept life with humility and patience, making allowances for one another because you love one another" (Ephesians 4:2. *Phillips*). Since we cannot claim perfection God must either make some allowances for us or we will be lost. I am convinced He is willing to do this because He loves us. But if we do not love our brothers enough to make allowances for their ignorance and mistaken views God cannot make allowance for us. We cannot expect to measure others by one rule and be measured by another.

It is for this reason we are under a "law of liberty" which means that we operate under a motivating principle of freedom. The apostle says, "We are free to serve not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit" (Romans 7:6). Note the contrast between a written code and the new life. If we were under law and not under grace we could not make allowances for one another regardless of the degree of our love.

We would have to "exact the pound of flesh" for every failure because law knows nothing of mercy, but only of justice. Mercy must be in the heart of the judge. It is not in the law. Since we serve in a new way and a new life we can extend mercy for ignorance and mitigating circumstances. Circumstances do

make a difference. "Anyway, you should speak and act as men who will be judged by the law of freedom. The man who makes no allowances for others will find none made for him. It is still true that 'mercy smiles in the face of judgment.'" (James 2:12, 13).

Recently, on the outskirts of a town I saw a sign which read: "Speed Limit— 25 Miles Per Hour. Fine— One Dollar for every mile in excess of limit. *Write your own ticket!"* **In that town the judge will assess you according to your own decision. The eternal judge will do the same. It is well to recall that Jesus said, "For if you forgive people their failures, your heavenly Father will forgive you; but if you do not forgive people their failures neither will your heavenly Father forgive yours" (Matthew 6:14, 15). In my own life it is an interesting experiment to sit down and think of some of the failures I have made and then to think of how I would like for God to deal with them. Then, all I need to do is to carry out the same approach to the failures of others. It is no wonder that through the ages this has been called "the golden rule." It represents about the highest level of approach to human dignity possible unto man on earth.**

A prospective proselyte once approached the aged Rabbi Hillel (who died when Jesus was about ten years old) and enquired of him what was involved in obeying the law. The reply was, "What is hateful to thee, do not unto others. This is the law, the rest is commentary." Jesus agreed that the rest was commentary but he turned it from a negative to a positive statement. "Therefore in whatever way you would have people treat you, treat them the same; for this sums up the law and the Prophets." You are writing your own ticket!

I am sure most of you have heard about the Greek legendary figure called Procrustes, which means "The Stretcher." He was one of a number of fabled brigands who patrolled the roads near Eleusis in Attica, taking frightful toll of travelers. Procrustes had an iron bedstead and when he

captured an individual he threw him upon it and tied him down. If the person was too long he sawed off his legs until he matched the bed for length. If he was too short Procrustes used iron stretchers to make him conform. When Procrustes was taken into custody by Theseus, the great national hero, he was treated to the same punishment he had administered to others. Theseus measured him upon his own bed and cut him down to size. This was the Greek way of illustrating the truth which had become proverbial among the Jews and was repeated by Jesus. "Judge not that you be not judged, for with what judgment you judge you will be judged."

Ever since I was a youngster I have been moved by the poem of Robert Southey concerning the Inchcape Bell. The bell was atop a buoy off the dangerous shore of Scotland. Its ceaseless ringing amidst the lashing breakers served as a warning to ships getting too close to the rocks. But one day Sir Ralph the Rover, the drunken captain of a privateer, bent over from the side of his boat and cut the bell loose from its moorings. It sank into the depths with a gurgling sound. Weeks later with his ship loaded with plunder, the captain steered for the coast of Scotland. A dense fog made it impossible for him to see the land and the frightened sailors listened in vain for the warning bell. The ship was wrecked upon the rocks and all who were aboard perished in the depths.

LETTING GOD BE GOD

In the year of 1952 there was published in England a fascinating little book of less than 120 pages. It bore the title *Your God is Too Small* **and its author was the clever and versatile J. B. Phillips. The writer acted upon the supposition that a lot of people in our day would believe in and accept a God who was big enough to handle modern needs. Unfortunately, the God offered by the various denominations, seemed to the world to be helpless and inadequate to cope with the problems of the space**

age.

Phillips divided his book into two parts. In the first he exposed the feeble and childish concepts projected by a lot of believers. In the second he offered practical suggestions of ways by which we might discover the real God of the universe for ourselves. In the section devoted to unreal Gods, the one I like best is titled "God-in-a-box." This does not mean the other essays are inferior. They are all powerful and penetrating. I think the reason I appreciate so highly the one I mention is because it uncovers my own frightening tendency in the past.

It is very comfortable for one who is reared in an exclusive religious circle to drift into the arrogant assumption that God is more interested in and concerned with those of his party than with others outside of that particular pale. I presume it is easy for Presbyterians to assume that God is a Presbyterian, while Methodists think of him as being a Methodist. Somehow we tend to get our rationalizations and fantasies mixed up until it appears to us that if we are trying to be like God He must at the same time be trying to be like us. The sin of the Jews before Jesus came was that they forgot that they belonged to God and thought that God belonged to them. It became easier to push Judaism than to project obedience to God.

The tragedy of all this is that as we minimize God we maximize ourselves. Human pride is a tricky thing and when it is multiplied by the number of those constituting a religious caste it actually becomes dangerous. It can readily be converted into a mob spirit concealed under what appears to be robes of righteousness. Almost as bad, it can just as readily convince us that God would be severely handicapped and might not even make it without us. God must either operate through our machinery or He cannot operate at all. He can only go where we take Him!

If we have God safely ensconced in our box others can see

Him only when we lift the lid. If we judge they are unworthy or might prove detrimental or embarrassing to the promotion of our cause we might not even lift the cover at all. In that case they will be "without hope and without God in the world." In any event they must come to us before they can come to Him. Playing God is one of the most popular and fashionable games in every age. It is as old as Satan and as new as the newest sect!

When we allow our spiritual thinking to mature we must awaken to the fact that it is not really God we have in our box. It is an image of God. We have made God in our image and in our likeness. There is no real indication that God pays the slightest attention to any of our historical boxes. He is free and unconfined. He cannot be crammed into a movement, party or sect. We are limited, inhibited and circumscribed by our creedal constructions but our God inhabits the universe.

Jesus taught that the will of the Father is sovereign and He has a perfect right to administer His affairs as He wishes. What God wills to do is right, because He has the right to will to do it! He may dispose fully of His blessings irrespective of any previous agreement. This is illustrated in the story of the farmer who went to hire laborers for His vineyard. Early in the morning he hired a group after agreeing to pay them each a silver coin per day. He went out again at nine o'clock in the morning, at noon, and at three o'clock and five o'clock in the afternoon. Each time he hired additional workers and told them to go to work and he would give them a fair wage.

At sundown the laborers were summoned and lined up to receive their pay. The foreman was told to start with the last ones who were hired and pay them first. As each came forward he was handed a silver coin. Those who were employed first expected to receive more but each got just one silver coin. This caused a lot of grumbling which came to the ears of the farmer. He said to them, "I'm not being unjust with you. Wasn't our agreement for a silver coin a day? Take your money and go

home. It is my wish to give the latecomer as much as I give you. May I not do what I like with what belongs to me? Must you be jealous because I am generous?"

In the final day of accounts there may be those who will share in the blessing of God's bounty, not upon the basis of an agreement, but upon the basis of fairness and justice. Jesus continually held out that no law was of universal application. We dare not bind God by a law which He has given to bind us. The source of all authority is not subject to the authority which proceeds from Himself. Moreover, when God put all things under the feet of Jesus He excepted Himself.

The grace of God existed before the church and is greater than the church. The grace of God created the church and was not created by it. We are under grace and not over it. While we have no right to violate the agreement of God, nor seek to receive His blessing upon any other ground. He will not violate that agreement if He sees fit to extend mercy above and beyond it. He can do what He wishes with what belongs unto Him. Let us hope we shall not be found grumbling about His administration of mercy nor seek to argue about our human concept of fairness.

THE UNIFIED LIFE

Jesus was a perplexing person to many who heard Him while He was on earth. They were disturbed by the fact that He taught, as well as by the facts which He taught. In the first place He did not make teaching His profession so He was not a professional teacher. Indeed, many of the greatest truths He uttered were spoken almost casually. Some of them were answers to hecklers. A famous man once said of a rural schoolteacher who had inspired him. "He taught as much before school and after as he did while we were sitting at our desks. There was no use of talking about taking up school for he never

let it out. We learned as much from him by playing with him at recess or when walking home with him as we did while poring over our books."

Jesus did not attend one of the schools for scribes. He did not go to a college for rabbinical students. He made no appeal to formal degrees or educational attainments as a reason why He should be heard. He never advertised His intellectual attainments. He was not a theologian and offered the people no course in systematic theology.

The scribes were generally sure of themselves, but they were not always sure of their teaching. It was too frequently a subject of dispute with other scribes. The difference between Jesus and the scribes was easily seen by the people. "When Jesus had finished this discourse the people were astonished at his teaching; unlike their own teachers he taught with a note of authority" (Matthew 7:28, 29). Any person who dares to rise above the narrow concepts of his age and set forth great principles will gain both enemies and friends. Jesus was no exception as his attendance at the Feast of Shelters upon one occasion demonstrated. "The Jews were looking for him at the festival and asked, 'Where is he?' and there was much whispering about him in the crowds. 'He is a good man,' said some. 'No,' said others, he is leading the people astray.'"

It was this occasion which gave Jesus an opportunity to enforce some great truths. One of these is the inner testimony to the truth of God which is resident in every sincere individual who is unreservedly following Christ to the best of his ability. It is not essential that one be conversant with the logical processes which go into books on apologetics in order to have assurance of the divine origin of the message of our Lord. Another principle is that a man demonstrates his sincerity when he aims at the honor of the one who sent him, rather than seeking for self-praise. These affirmations were called forth because of the astonishment of the Jews.

Here is the way the scriptures record it. "When the festival was already half over, Jesus went up to the temple and began to teach. The Jews were astonished. 'How is it,' they said, 'that this untrained man has such learning?' Jesus replied, 'The teaching I give is not my own, it is the teaching of him that sent me. Whoever has the will to do the will of God shall know whether my teaching comes from him or is merely my own. Anyone whose teaching is merely his own, aims at honor for himself. But if a man aims at the honor of him who sent him he is sincere, and there is nothing false in him" (John 7:14-18).

It is my personal conviction that the teaching of Jesus would provoke about as much astonishment today as it did among the Jews, if it was correctly evaluated. Actually, most of us take what Jesus said and fit it into thought patterns of our own. We have formulated our ideas of goodness and righteousness and into these moulds we pour the great teachings of the Master and conceive of the crystallized forms we produce as being those of heaven. Men tend to think of holiness in terms of places and times. They define goodness in relation to specific deeds. To them, it consists of particular performances in a particular manner. The one who does these things is considered to be a righteous man because he does them. All of this would be regarded by Jesus as superficial, perhaps even a hypocritical approach.

Jesus taught the ideal of a completely unified life, an existence wholly integrated and not separated into various departments. The entire personality is governed by a central force and it is this abiding internal principle which makes one good. Goodness does not consist in the mere performance of deeds. It is an inner quality of being. There is no distinction between thoughts and deeds, or between motives and actions. Things are good because they are done by good men. It is the man, not merely the transaction, which makes the difference. "A good man produces good from the store of good within himself; and an evil man from evil produces evil" (Matthew 12:35).

The nobility of this concept escaped the legalists in the days when Jesus was on earth. It still escapes those on earth since Jesus returned to heaven. Few of us dare even yet to believe that "A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, or a poor tree good fruit" (Matthew 7:18). An apple tree is not an apple tree because it has apples on it, but because it is that kind of tree it bears apples. It is obvious that if it is impossible for a good tree to produce bad fruit, then whatever is produced by such a tree must be good. However, men tend to exalt laws instead of the principles such laws were given to preserve. The keeping of such laws then becomes the chief good. Any deviation there from is regarded as evil.

There is a higher good than that of keeping laws. Laws are given to regulate relationships and those relationships are superior to the regulations. Jesus used as an example the case of David and his men when they were fleeing from Saul. Being hungry, they entered the sacred precincts of the house of God and ate the loaves of the Presence, "which it was not lawful for them to eat." When there is a conflict between perpetuation of life and performance of law, the first becomes the chief good. Life is superior to law! Actually there is no conflict about this in the heart of the one who truly understands Jesus, for he spontaneously does what is right. He "produces good from the store of good within." He does not have to stop and quibble about the matter. The decision has been made long ago. It is not the good deed which produces the store within, but it is the good store within that produces the good deed. It is not new deeds or new acts that Jesus wants, but new men! "You must be made new in mind and spirit, and put on the new nature of God's creating, which shows itself in the just and devout life called for by truth" (Ephesians 4:24).

GOD'S ARTESIAN WELLS

Jesus taught that while all righteousness welled up from

within it had to flow out. He knew nothing about a faith kept bottled up by traditional restraints. So effervescent was true religion and goodness that they would burst the bottles (Luke 5:37). The faith never grows old but wineskins do and when they lose their elasticity the faith makes a breach in them and flows out. It cannot be contained in historic structures.

Jesus knew that religion was not a stagnant pool. It was a flowing spring. It was not a cistern but an artesian well. It is significant that it was when he was sitting on the curb of a cistern or well that Jesus said to the Samaritan woman, "The water that I shall give will be an inner spring always welling up for eternal life." It is no less significant that it was near the site of one of the great springs which helped to create the Jordan River that He said, "Upon this rock I will plant my community and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it." On the final day of the festival in Jerusalem He said of the believer, "Streams of living water shall flow out from within him" (John 7:38).

Here, then is the real test of whether one has been touched by Jesus. When Moses struck the rock at Horeb, water gushed out of it to quench the thirst of the people who were murmuring (Exodus 17:16). One moment it was just a rock, hard and impenetrable. Now it was a source of life. Everyone could see that something tremendous had happened. Our hearts are like rock until God fills them with His Spirit. Until that happens we are merely a part of the complaining mob. Under the hand of God we become channels of grace and blessing. The power of God is never demonstrated more than when a selfish, grasping individual is burst asunder and generosity, kindness and compassion "flow through the desert like a river."

The true religion was to be known by its *fruits.* **Jesus knew that a religion which did not reveal itself openly was empty and vacuous. He pronounced a sentence of condemnation upon the fig tree when He came and found no fruit. He could not be content with mere leaves. There are no ornamental trees in**

God's acreage. The church is not a park but an orchard. One either bears fruit or cumbers the ground. God demands the whole man and nothing less. Someone has said, "It does not take much of a man to make a Christian, but it takes all of him there is."

Jesus only painted one verbal picture of the final judgment scene and in it He made no allusion to worthiness based upon knowledge of doctrine, theological perception or argumentative ability. He did not say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, for you have memorized the entire letter to the Hebrews." He spoke of such things as giving food to the hungry and drink to the thirsty, of welcoming strangers, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and those in prison. The criterion for entering into life and possessing the kingdom was simply the good done for others. This was not an orthodoxy of doctrine but of doing.

It is interesting to note that in this presentation Jesus goes to some length to show that those who gave food and drink, showed hospitality, sheltered the homeless and clothed the naked, did not know they were doing it for Him. They were motivated by compassion and not by hope of reward. They were not so much demonstrating their religion as their character. Their good deeds were not partisan gimmicks to advertise "our church" or to influence people toward it. They were simply sharing what they had with suffering humanity and were surprised to hear Jesus say, "Anything you did for one of my brothers here, however humble, you did for me."

This may help to explain another statement of Jesus. "I tell you there is not a thoughtless word that comes from men's lips but they will have to account for it in the day of judgment." The King James Version has "idle word." The Revised Standard Version renders it "careless word." I confess that this used to bother me. That was before I considered it in the light of the context. At first it seems very extreme. It tends to portray God as a harsh and exacting taskmaster instead of a loving Father. But

we must remember that a man does not reveal his true self when he is on guard and watching every word. It is when his guard is down and he is not trying to make an impression for social or other reasons that he shows what he really is. Many a man is the soul of politeness when he is sitting in a Sunday School class. But that same man may be wholly different when he is on the job on Monday.

It is the careless or idle word, the chance act, which gives a glimpse into the heart. You cannot judge a man so well by his formal as by his informal speech. Since judgment has to do with the man as he is, this is the proper criterion— the word idly spoken, the careless or thoughtless expression.

THE UNVEILED FACE

Jesus taught that the inner quality called goodness is never static. It is ever changing and amending character for the better. The good man is never satisfied with his current state. He must be ever climbing, and never standing still. Complacency has no place in the life of the concerned one. The man who stands and boasts of what he is and what he has done merits no notice from God. An outcast from society who bows his head, smites his breast, confesses his sins, and prays for forgiveness, goes to his house justified rather than the other. The apostle Paul makes a statement which portrays the creative nature of the goodness which keeps the eye fixed upon Jesus. "And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit" (2 Corinthians 3:16).

"The unveiled face . . . are being changed." Think about these expressions. It is the man who "sees through a glass darkly" who does not change. His vision is distorted, his perspective is warped, his sight is clouded. There are veils over the faces of many— veils of prejudice, of tradition, of

partisanship. These allow only a blurred image of the Christ. One cannot properly discern his Lord through a veil of prejudice. Such a man may be like the disciples on the way to Emmaus. They were actually talking about Jesus and what had happened unto Him. It was inconceivable that anyone who resided in the vicinity of Jerusalem should not know these things. "As they talked and discussed it with one another, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; but something held their eyes from seeing who it was" (Luke 24:15). It is possible to know a lot of things about Jesus and still not know Him! There are so many things which seem to hold our eyes!

The goodness of which Jesus spoke is not merely outgoing. It is also ongoing. It produces a flexibility of soul, an elasticity of spirit, which allows itself to be shaped and reshaped by increasing knowledge. It is not hardened by conformity to the past or by the infirmity of the present. It is transformed and transforming, striving ever to an unattainable ideal, yet becoming more ideal for the striving. It regards the will of God, not as a restraining fence but as a ladder, and even as one climbs the rungs he looks between them to a new vista and a better world offering new challenges for tomorrow.

Our lives may be circumscribed by circumstances. One may be physically handicapped until he is confined to one place until another comes and moves his wheelchair. We may seem chained to one spot by conditions beyond our control. But the mind is not chained unless we will it so. In his Yale lectures on preaching John Henry Jowett tells of a visit to a shoe cobbler in Wales. He asked the man if he did not feel cramped by his very small shop in which there was hardly room to turn around. The man said he did not and asked the noted preacher to follow him to a window that opened out upon the sea. "When I feel tired and cramped, I look through this window and it steadies me," he said. His physical surroundings were cramped but his vision was unlimited. This is what happens to any person who allows the Word of God to be a window in which to look at the universe,

rather than a wall which fences us in!

A Redemptive Fellowship

Contents

If you think that life is humdrum and unexciting you should read the book *The Adventure of Living* by Paul Tournier. All of us have different tastes in literature as we do in food. Thus far I have relished everything that this eminent physician and psychiatrist in Geneva has dished up. I especially appreciate his concern for persons as indicated even by the titles of some of his better known volumes.

***The Healing of Persons* postulates that the road to recovery may actually begin when the sufferer realizes the therapeutic value of deep and prayerful meditation. *The Meaning of Persons* affirms the difference between the real person and the personage. The latter term is used for the mask which men wear as the artificial product of culture. *The Whole Person in a Broken World* deals in a kind of profound fashion with the effect of the scientific method upon the whole philosophy of life. All of us, without exception, have experienced the invasion of our lives by the culture in which we battle to keep our heads above water. Not one of us has escaped the feeling that we exist in a fragmented and disoriented material universe.**

All of the volumes thus speak to our condition, but the one I first mentioned catches me up in its pages because of its incisive analysis of our problem and the prescription for remedying it. Dr. Tournier declares that at the heart of humanity's sickness lies the failure of man to fulfill himself. He further asserts that many of us fail miserably in expressing our true selves because

we are always asking for and accepting cheap substitutes for real adventure.

You can read the book for yourself. When you do you will probably be most impressed by the chapter bearing the title "The Adventure of God." It is here the author refers to God as "the great adventurer." He thinks this is implied in the very word Creator. He also suggests that the earthly adventure of Jesus was "the supreme adventure, with its supreme risk of disappointment and suffering." The chapter closes with two sentences I want to share with you. "In the Bible we rediscover the deep emotion which rekindles within us the fire of adventure. The Bible also gives adventure its true meaning, for from end to end it reveals what is at stake in all our work, all our activity, all our choices, and all our self-commitment."

I like the author's fortunate choice of the words "rediscover" and "rekindle." The first indicates that we have lost something. The second suggests that we have allowed a valuable emotion to be snuffed out, or to die down until it no longer burns brightly. In our day of spiritual illiteracy men exhibit the power to control everything but themselves. Insane men can pull switches, and when they do the result will follow, as regulated by those switches, as certainly as it would if the most rational being on earth had manipulated the levers. The world is sick, sad and sordid. It is cold, cruel and calculating. To offset its sickness and sadness it must re-discover an emotion. To overcome its coldness and cruelty it must rekindle the fire of adventure.

Our only hope is to return to the Bible, not simply to learn how to work, how to act, or how to choose, but to find out what is at stake in all of these. The word "stake" relates to that which is hazarded for gain or loss, but it also means a prize for which men strive in a contest. We need to know what is at stake in life and we can only find out by turning to the Word of God. It is a sad commentary on the way in which modern man has allowed himself to be hoodwinked by the enemy of souls that a lot of

people in our day regard the Bible as dry, dead and uninteresting.

One who devotes himself to unrelenting research of the Bible, who regularly reads it and talks about it, is often regarded as eccentric. This is a strange turn of events, for the word literally means "out of center." When applied to an individual it is used in the sense of odd, irregular or unusual. God is either the center of the universe or it is not a universe. The Bible either contains His revelation or there is none, and man is left without a polestar by which to adjust his compass.

We are a far cry from the world of four centuries ago when there was ushered in an era of almost three hundred years in which knowledge of the Bible was considered an absolute necessity for an English gentleman who wished to succeed in life. The sacred volume was read daily in many homes. Often the children and servants were examined as to their grasp of what had been read. Memorization of vast portions of scripture was encouraged. The Book was quoted in literature, in circles of business, or street corners and in the halls of Parliament. J. R. Green, in his now famous work *Short History of the English People,* **wrote: "England became the people of a book, and that book was the Bible." By the time of William Ewart Gladstone, prime minister under Queen Victoria, "the impregnable rock of holy scripture," as he called the Bible, had become a foundation for moral and intellectual life. With our modern surrender of faith and knowledge we sacrificed the spirit of adventure on the altar of "the unknown God."**

One of the most penetrating writers of our generation is Elton Trueblood, and one of his most powerful books is *Alternative to Futility***. It consists of five lectures presented at the Austin (Texas) Presbyterian Theological Seminary in 1948. It is significant that Dr. Trueblood, at the end of his preface, has inscribed the words "Earlham College— Two years after Hiroshima." The justification for the book was that "modern**

man, now come to a full consciousness of his spiritual sickness, is ready for the first time to accept a thoroughgoing remedy." I am interested in the fact that the second chapter of the little volume bears the title, "The Habit of Adventure."

In his autobiography entitled "While It Is Day," Dr. Trueblood says that he wrote *Alternative to Futility* **after his first full year of teaching at Earlham College. He states, "It was produced with a greater sense of exhilaration than I have known in any other literary effort." He also tells how, in conferences with the editors of Harper and Row, he worked out the format which he followed in his subsequent books. A unique feature was a pertinent quotation appearing in italics at the head of each chapter. I am particularly pleased that the one chosen to head the chapter to which I referred is from Alfred North Whitehead, the professor of philosophy at Harvard University, who died the year Trueblood was writing his book. The quotation says, "Without adventure civilization is in full decay."**

Dr. Trueblood writes, "In the spirit of adventure, and by the use of disciplined imagination, we might be able to encourage a new growth, *within the existent churches.* **We might be able to inaugurate a redemptive movement that could take our dry bones and make them live . . . What we require, then, is a new reformation, but not one like that of the sixteenth century, which divided Christians so sharply. We need a reformation which unites at a deep level."**

It is an unfortunate fact of life that few of those who hear prophetic voices ever allow what they say to seep down into the subsoil of consciousness. Their words are like brief thundershowers on a drouth-stricken earth. They serve only to harden the layer of surface dirt and add to the parched state of the vegetation. There are drops of spiritual moisture in the brief statement of Dr. Trueblood which should challenge us to the depths of our being. Spirit of adventure. Disciplined imagination. New growth. A redemptive fellowship. A new

reformation. Unity at a deep level. There is nothing feeble about such concepts. No wonder the eminent professor who admits to being greatly influenced by C. S. Lewis called his book *Alternative to Futility.*

I must confess that for a long time I kept Jesus at arm's length. It wasn't that I disliked Him. I was not really afraid of Him. As I try to think through my attitude in retrospect of those days in which I delivered sermons about Him (as you talk about a friend in a remote country whom you have never seen). I think I was really afraid of myself. By making Him an object of religious veneration, singing songs about Him a couple of times per week, and discussing His recorded words in the context of "theology" I could keep my distance and yet stay close enough to Him to call Him to hear me in case of emergency.

Now I want to be as close to Him as possible. It isn't a matter of protection or of being on safe ground. I am just more comfortable with Him than with anyone else in the universe. This is not an easy thing. It is not conducive to a "hail fellow well met" or "devil may care" stance. It is a responsibility which keeps one on his toes, and off the toes of others. You are forced to realize that what others say about Jesus may not be valid for you. Even when they quote His words they may put a slant upon them, or be using them as a tool to build some kind of rigid mental structure which they can control.

This necessitates your listening to Him as if no one had ever heard Him before. But one does not exist in a vacuum. All of his life he has been subjected to interpretations and opinions about what Jesus meant by what He said. He approaches the things recorded about Jesus dressed in a mental garb which others have woven, cut out and sewed together, according to a pattern they have devised, and which many of them think was provided with the fabric. It is a little like going into a supposed virgin forest only to find that all of the trees bear blaze-marks. In spite of this, I think that each of us is obligated to listen to

Jesus as if no one else had ever heard Him except those who actually wrote down what He said. It is one thing to read the record of the life of a person, but a wholly different thing to allow that person to become your life.

As for myself I can testify that it made a great deal of difference in my life and thought when I was led to really look at Jesus in what G. K. Chesterton has called "the strangest story in the world." Perhaps one of the most difficult things in this life is to accept the thought that there is anything really new. We must always compare and contrast it with something already existing, something which we have learned to handle and control. So Jesus must be compared to Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Hillel, and other philosophers, and we must sort out His pronouncements and match them with theirs. Even a new life must be the old life polished up until it shines. We can accept a philosophy which indicates most things made new, but not one which begins with "Behold!" and declares that "all things are made new." There are some old things that we would like to keep.

We reduce Christ to "Christianity" because it has been around for a good many centuries and has been shaped and moulded by speculation and opinion until it is easily handled. Christianity now comes under various brands and trademarks. We see its varied temples upon every side. We can "walk our fingers through the yellow pages" until we come to the one we seek, neatly filed under its own special heading. It is not easy to deal with a Christ who is unchanging and unswerving. The tragedy of sectarian division is that it encourages us to dabble in the shallows of a protected pond rather than to launch out into the deep. It blunts the challenge of the faith with a faith. It too easily substitutes a system for the Savior.

THE RELIGION OF RISK

There is an aura of glamor about the very word adventure.

We think of risk and daring when we hear it. There is nothing staid or commonplace in its implications. It is unfortunate that we seldom think of it in connection with the religion of Christ. The faith has lost something vital in its modern watered down version. It is often reduced to a routine of meeting attendance and this may be carried out from a sense of duty or because of fear of divine reprisal. Actually the brand of "Christianity" with which we are too familiar has little relationship to the kind of life which was characteristic of Jesus and the primitive saints. It has lost much of its verve and most of its vision.

We have been conditioned to a life of security and safety. Our bank deposits are guaranteed by a federal insurance corporation. Old age has its social security and pensions. We are sheltered and protected against the storms of life. Every aspect of existence has its safeguards. Religion is no exception. The result is that it has lost its appeal to the fearless and the brave. It tends to become primarily the resort of the very young or the very old— the adolescent and the aged. But the "Christianity" we see manifested is no more like the original than a stroll through the city park is like climbing the Matterhorn. The very fact that men have diluted and weakened it is proof that they cannot tackle the responsibility involved in its powerful demands.

We hear a great many sermons dealing with the quiet life, and advocating a serene and placid disposition. These have led us to think that Christianity is a rocking-chair existence. We conjure up visions of saints as retired persons, sitting in the shade, reading the Bible and conversing with mutual friends about matters of common concern. This is not the picture which the Bible paints. As God reveals it, the believer is a man of action impelled by an inner compulsion that allows no time for rest. He is pictured as a boxer, not in training but in combat. He is not beating the air or punching a bag. He is fighting for his life and willing to die to obtain it!

He is depicted as a soldier, not on leave or furlough, but engaged in deadly warfare. God's word knows nothing about a soldier in civilian dress, but clad in the full panoply of armor with sword unsheathed and pressing the battle against an implacable foe. The Christian is engaged in a race. He is not sitting in the grandstand but is down on the course, running, straining, grasping, sweating, reaching toward the prize. We have become a nation of spectators. The many loll at ease to watch the few fight for victory. Thousands fill the stands to see a handful of persons battle it out on the playing field. This philosophy has invaded the field of religion and our contributions become the price of admission to watch professionals perform.

We need to recapture the sense of personal adventure in the religion of Jesus. We should cease to make safety a fetish or security a god. Faith involves risk. It is true that it is a firm conviction as to things for which we hope, but that hope lies in the future and is not yet realized. It is also true that it is a firm confidence, but it is a confidence in things not seen. One who takes the leap of faith does so with the trust that His hands will be there to catch us and bear us up.

Anyone who flies in a jet-powered plane six miles above the surface of the earth is taking a risk, but not nearly so great a risk as if he were borne into space on an eagle's wings. "But they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint" (Isaiah 40:31). We have too many who are grounded by fright, bounded by caution and bounded by fear.

Jesus did not teach men to "play it safe." He taught them to live dangerously. He implied that it was better to risk and lose than to keep through fear. Do you remember the man with one talent? "I was afraid and I went and hid your talent." This man expected to be commended for his prudence and discretion.

Instead he was addressed as a "wicked and slothful servant." This seems like strong language to apply to one who sought to safeguard another's property. But it is better to lose through use than to fail through fear. One is wicked when he seeks to "hold his own" when what he holds should not be held. He is slothful when he hides in the ground that which should be in circulation. Non-use is abuse! The master said, "You ought to have invested my money." When one invests he takes a chance. The one-talent individual pleaded the nature of the master as his excuse but the parable implies that it is that very thing which should prompt one to put what he has to work. The servant was faithful who "went and did"; that one was worthless who "went and hid."

The New English Bible **renders Matthew 16:25, "Whoever cares for his own safety is lost; but if a man will let himself be lost for my sake, he will find his true self." Men leave home to seek for gold, uranium or diamonds. When they find that for which they are looking a dream comes true. Yet it is a fact that the actual finding is often an anticlimax. It is the anticipation, the searching without knowing what the next minute will produce that is the real adventure. Not so with the man who finds his "true self." Life really begins when this happens. Millions are doomed to plod their weary way through earthly existence and never make this discovery.**

Our lives are "bound by shallows and by miseries," as Shakespeare puts it, because we are afraid to risk everything. We are frightened by what our relatives will say or what our neighbors will think. We fetter and shackle ourselves by rigid conformity. Life becomes a drudgery and a bore. We want to "stay in good" with all around us and we are resigned to insipid mediocrity to do so. "Whoever cares for his own safety is lost." Many are lost in their own homes. Many are lost in their own congregations. There are great causes to challenge thinking. There are great crusades which need conducting. There are abuses which need correcting. Those who take up the cross will be ridiculed, reviled and derided. But the heart will beat faster

with the spirit of real adventure and when it seems that all has been lost all will be gained. This is the way of the cross!

There is a difference in being at cross purposes with those around you and having *the cross purpose* for your life. Too many have a martyr complex. These are not killed. They simply commit suicide. They do not lose their lives, they merely take them. They cannot find themselves because they look too close to home. They get in their own way. Note that it is not the man who merely *invests* his life who will gain. There are thousands who commit their lives to the church and the religious way of existence. You can check their names on the record. You can see them sitting in the pews every Sunday, you can behold their punctilious observance of all the rules and ordinances. They will tell you that through habit "the church has become a part of our lives." That is the trouble— life is partitioned off in little well-defined cubicles. There isn't anything about such protected and well-regulated little procedures as they indulge which is adventurous.

What a change occurs when someone who has been hanging on the church by his finger nails or "the skin of his teeth," suddenly encounters Jesus! It may not happen while he is doing what the world calls "something religious." Too often the church comes between one and Jesus. Our performances in it may act as masks to obscure reality. Sometimes the meeting occurs as a crisis in life. Everything which seemed so secure and orderly comes crashing down about your shoulders. It may be bankruptcy which "wipes you out." It may be the incredible unfaithfulness and infidelity of one in whom you placed implicit confidence. It may be a sin of your own, a sin of such enormity you cannot believe you did it.

But whatever it is, while you are poking through the rubble of your caved-in dreams, weeping in emptiness and soul-hunger, until you come to the place where you cast yourself recklessly down before the Lord of life, you will sense that

another is walking in the wasteland with you. And you will know your companion is the rebuilder of shattered hopes, the resurrection!

BUILDING ON THE BEDROCK

There is a constant temptation in our modern culture to identify ourselves with Jesus in word while ignoring His demands upon our lives. It is a matter of personal honor to be regarded as a Christian. In respectable circles of society it is a card of admission. It is a good recommendation when you seek a position as a junior executive. It has come to pass that being a Christian is no more of an adventure than being a minor stockholder in Bethlehem Steel or the Carey Salt Company. A Christian is no more expected to change the world than a holder of one share is expected to change the policy of these corporations. Both are expected to acknowledge the head of the firm and do nothing but conform.

Unfortunately for this philosophy, acknowledgment of the head of the community of saints entails a life of non-conformity to the world. We cannot really recognize His lordship without assuming our own responsibility to change and transform the environment in which we live. Any person who attempts this embarks upon the high seas of adventure. He will become a prophet without honor in his own country. He may be stigmatized and ostracized by the unthinking ones whose hearts he tries to fire with the real message of God. "It is always the same— you never fail to resist the Holy Spirit! Just as your fathers did, so you are doing now. Can you name a single prophet whom your fathers did not persecute?" (Acts 7:51, 52). Those to whom this was addressed proved the validity of the accusation. They stoned to death the one who asked the question.

We live in a profit-taking and not a prophet-making

society! Our norm is deadly to the spirit. We address Jesus as Lord but serve *things* as our gods. Thus we are absorbed and assimilated by the culture around us. We talk about adjustment to life and by this we mean adapting ourselves to the standards of the world. We are afraid of being conspicuous by being different. Our witness is stultified, our hopes are crucified, and we become resigned to hopeless mediocrity. There is no longer very much that is heroic about what we call Christianity.

Jesus recognized the temptation to conform. He asked, "What is the point of calling me 'Lord, Lord,' without doing what I tell you to do?" This implies that there really is no point to much of what passes for Christianity in these days. Those who subscribe to it are quick to acknowledge Jesus as Lord but the idea that they should actually adopt the implications of His way of life is remote from their thinking. The "churches" are geared and managed so that the spirit is not free. If one should attempt to eat with publicans and sinners he would be treated exactly as was the Master during His personal sojourn on earth. Every day must have been one of genuine adventure for Jesus. It was also one fraught with constant danger.

Our lives are too shallow. It is easier to set up a prefabricated structure on the sand than to build a permanent home. The whole world around us is one vast sub-division consisting of pre-fabs. A man who goes in for solid construction is regarded as an oddball. If one chooses a course in college which will enable him to serve the needs of humanity instead of to secure a lucrative position, if he reads and studies diligently even to the neglect of the big football game of the season he is a "square." If he expresses a deep conviction in Bible class on Sunday which cuts across the thinking of the party with which he is allied he is a dangerous influence and will have to be warned. Because of this, religion has become a tedious and monotonous performance. We must recapture the spirit of adventure or die because we have lost the sense of adventure of the spirit.

Here is the way Jesus puts it. "Let me show you what the man who comes to me, hears what I have to say, and puts it into practice, is really like. He is like a man building a house, who dug down to rock bottom and laid the foundations of his house upon it. Then when the flood came and the flood water swept down upon that house, it could not shift because it was properly built." Note that the test of a properly built house is not its external attractiveness but its ability to withstand times of crisis. The strength is derived not from the superstructure but from the foundation. Before a man can build upward he must first dig downward. If he does not do this any structure he erects will be superficial. That word is from a Latin term which means "lying on the surface." It refers to something which does not penetrate below that which can be seen.

But what is "rock bottom"? How do you know when you have dug deep enough? The rock bottom life is one that involves three things— coming to Jesus, hearing his words, and putting them into practice. When one adopts as his philosophy one of total commitment to Jesus, when he resolves to reproduce the life of Jesus on earth to the fullest extent, subject only to his human limitation, that person has his "rock bottom." He is then ready to start building. After that, every stone he lays will bring him nearer heaven. What are some of the involvements of the rock bottom way of life? Let me suggest a few and this will enable you to test the permanency of your dwelling.

1. A universal love for mankind based not upon reciprocity, but upon love for love's sake. The word for this is philanthropy. It is not love bestowed with a view of return. The world cannot be changed by love of force but by the force of love. We must inaugurate a reign of love in our hearts with all men as subjects. To the extent one does not love, to that extent he does not live. Love does not wait to see if it will be either received or returned. It is a blessing to bestow and not a bait with which to bargain. Love is never cheap, and what one gives or gets that is cheap, cannot be love. I think we need to recall

again the words of Jesus which we have previously quoted, "For if you love only those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even the tax collectors do that."

2. An association with men based not upon their agreement with us but upon their need of compassion and understanding. The closest companions of Jesus were often ignorant, selfish and quarrelsome. They did not grasp His purpose nor understand His motives. They selfishly tried to maneuver themselves into positions of prominence and prestige in a kingdom which had not yet come. They rebuked Him in some of His most solemn declarations. They sought to regulate where He would go and when. In the moment of His greatest crisis they lay down on the ground and went to sleep.

In spite of all this Jesus never left them. He did not tell them that unless they straightened up He would withdraw Himself from them. To limit our association only to those who parrot our traditional slogans and fit the stereotype we have created is not to follow Jesus. It is to deny Him. Such an attitude of exclusivism is born of pride which will destroy us. It gratifies our own desire for prestige but defeats the purpose for which Jesus died. True adventure lies outside our narrow walls which we have erected because of fear and insecurity. We must love daringly. "And if you exchange greetings only with your own circle, are you doing anything exceptional? Even the pagans do as much."

3. A renunciation of the rule of gold in behalf of the Golden Rule. This will enable you to disprove the cynical proverb that "every man has his price." No one can give his loyalty to some things and be loyal to the creator of all things. It is impossible to serve both the creature and the Creator. The temptation to try and do so is one of the most inviting in the world.

During the past decade we have seen how this has once more fulfilled the declaration of Jesus, "I have come to set a man

against his father, and a daughter against her mother" (Matthew 10:35). Many parents have grown up in a world of affluence and inflation. It is an age of what is called the "expanding economy." At a time when millions go to bed hungry every night, and thousands die from malnutrition and starvation in other parts of the world, we gorge ourselves. One of the symbols of our day is the fast food franchise. Quick service eateries line our highways as do the poor begging for bread in India.

Many young people reared in homes of wealth, have forsaken them to identify with the downtrodden and despised of the earth. I know of young men and women who have gone to minister to Indian tribes where death often comes early because of unsanitary conditions. I know of others who have made long treks to faraway places to discover their own identity. All of this bothers their parents who keep asking where they have failed. They have provided an education which would enable their offspring to become trusted bank presidents, engineers of note, or scientists of acclaim. It distresses them when these young people graduate and turn their backs upon the whole bit to live in an Eskimo village, or in the black ghetto of the inner-city.

What such parents should do is to recognize that their children have weighed the gold standard against the bold standard of faith and sharing and rejected the former because it has no promise after this brief life is over. "A man's life consists not of the abundance of things which he possesses." I do not think this amounts to rejection of parents at all. It is to be regretted that they have allowed themselves to become so identified with a certain ambitious way of life that they can no longer distinguish between themselves as persons and the lifestyle they have adopted.

4. A substitution of forgiveness of failures for a failure to forgive. This is not the same as ignoring failures or merely overlooking them. It requires a recognition of the failures and an understanding of those who have failed. It is not the same as

pretending that no failure exists. The Bible quotes the words of Jesus thus, "For if you forgive other people their failures, your Heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you will not forgive other people, neither will your Heavenly Father forgive you your failures."

It is apparent from this that the only individual who can dare to be unforgiving of the shortcomings of another is one who is perfect. To be unforgiving of others is to plait a noose for one's own neck. There is some truth in the idea that no one can ever be a real person who has not learned the grace of forgiveness. Certainly one cannot truly be like God unless he has learned and demonstrated the art of forgiving. The apostle brings it into focus with the expression, "forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you" (Ephesians 4:32). Thomas Fuller, the English physician, wrote in 1732, "The worst of men are those who will not forgive." Families have been wrecked, churches torn asunder, and nations destroyed because of unwillingness to forgive slights, whether real or imaginary.

In his intriguing volume *None of these Diseases,* **Dr. S. I. McMillen has a chapter entitled "The High Cost of Getting Even." In it he points out the startling fact that the moment you start hating a man you become his slave. Even though he may be hundreds of miles away he affects your sleep, your eating, your relationship to those about you, and may even be responsible for your developing ulcers or colitis. Perhaps Jesus was trying to save us unnecessary doctor bills when He said we should forgive a man seventy time seven. Jesus had a lot to say about forgiveness, but nothing was more vital than His observation, "If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you."**

5. A proper sense of values leading to a life free from concern about the merely sensual and physical aspects of existence. The pagans in the days when Jesus was upon earth were always thinking of things to eat, drink or wear. The neo-

pagans of our own day exhibit the same characteristics. Over against these is the wholly committed life. "Set your heart on His kingdom and His goodness, and all these things will come to you as a matter of course."

Only a house built upon an immovable rock will not be shaken or rocked by storm and wind. It costs too much to build cheaply. No house can be better than he who lives in it for "every house is built by some man." We build for this age only when we build on the sand. That which is to endure for the ages must be built on the Rock of Ages. Shifting sands and drifting lives will not stand against wild waters and sweeping storms. Let us all take heed how we build.

Adventure in the Spirit

Contents

Many of our readers will have noticed that we have thus far said little about the Holy Spirit and our relationship to Him. We have emphasized the sheer adventure involved in entering into a vital and life-changing experience with Jesus, but this must not be regarded as a deliberate slight against the Spirit. Any attempt to downgrade the Spirit would be a reflection against Jesus who promised the Spirit to believers in Him in such glowing terms.

Moreover, any true relationship with Jesus will be effected by the Spirit. It is impossible to think of one without taking the other into account. Indeed, the Spirit is called the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ. They are indissolubly linked together in aim, effort and accomplishment. The motivating and regulatory principle which governs one who is no longer under condemnation is referred to in a beautiful expression as the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1). In the same chapter, in one verse, occurs the terms the Spirit, the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of Christ. The immediate concern of the latter is provocative. "Any one who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him" (verse 9).

All of us are aware of the tremendous upsurge of interest in the Holy Spirit during the decade just past. This is good. Modern man needs to become aware of the futility of his own efforts to bring order out of chaos. He needs to realize that all of the political schemes he can devise cannot lift him out of the

mire caused by sin. He needs to return unto God and "crucify the flesh with its passions and desires." It is a good omen when men fall upon their knees and call upon God.

For several centuries little has been said about the thrust of the Spirit in our rapidly developing technological age. This is not so much because believers denied the existence of the Spirit, but rather reflects a lack of their sense of need of His power or assistance. Man has been riding high in the saddle. In a nation which was once conceived of as having unlimited natural resources we have developed an ease of living never before known. Mistakenly we have referred to it as "the good life," without realizing that it was actually a smoother road toward death and decay.

We have raped our forests. We have assaulted our land. We have polluted our streams. We have destroyed God's creatures wantonly. We have indulged in that ghastly form of pride which manifests itself in racial prejudice. We have laughed at morality and ridiculed purity. We have elected men to represent us who took bribes, men who lied, men who were adulterers and fornicators. Exhausted, frightened, and helpless in our weakness we have turned to the Spirit of God.

Candor forces us to admit that what we have called "the Christian religion" has done little to prepare us for the moral bankruptcy we face. In the first place, we have shattered the body of believers into sects and parties, each one of which was born of fear, nurtured on the pap of pride, while growing up in an atmosphere of affluence in which the Spirit was seldom mentioned. In our fragmentation we have expended our energies and depleted our resources in fighting other believers, esteeming orthodoxy of opinion to be of more importance than the cross of Jesus, or, what is worse, equating the two as one. We have contributed to the confusion instead of alleviating it.

Each party has developed a fierce sense of pride which

manifests itself in costly structures, elaborate rituals and fierce rivalry for attention. Each has been engaged in a struggle for a place in the sun, a development of a public image. All have forgotten that those who carve out an image always end up worshiping it. Churches have fled from the inner city to maintain their image. In a spirit of self-righteousness we have resented the poor, the ignorant and social outcasts. The question has not been what God thinks of the downtrodden but "What will people think of us?"

Now a great change has taken place. It began when a generation sickened by the thought of continuous war with the frightful toll of innocent civilians, began to regard Christianity as a conscience-shield for those who wiped out whole cities of helpless humans who were mere pawns of war-makers, victims of "man's inhumanity to man." In a vain and misguided attempt to transcend the ceaseless round on the treadmill they experimented with chemically induced highs, forgetting that the morning after would be worse than the night before. In their quest for ecstasy they increased the agony.

The collapse of this woeful experiment of idealists turned them in another direction. This time it was sex. Again the immature approach made two grave errors. It confused sex with love and life. It is neither, although it can be an expression of both. But just as the aftermath of the drug culture left those who did not free themselves from the clutch of its icy fingers hopelessly hooked, so the sex binge left its toll of those doomed to drift from one affair to another, never capable of making a true commitment or of keeping a covenant. Sex became as empty and void as the lives of its hedonistic worshipers.

The further search for meaning turned to the East. It did so for a number of reasons which we cannot detail here. The guru who sat cross-legged and meditated while hundreds suffered from hunger and starvation outside his compound became the hero of the day. He was calm, collected and

disinterested. Young and old, drifting aimlessly upon the current of existence, sought for wise men who could give the answer they sought. They listened to esoteric language which neither he who spoke nor they who heard could understand. They hailed it as profound because it was veiled. Clever Oriental manipulators took advantage of the trend and moved into the West to siphon off the wealth from those whose faith had curdled into gullibility.

And then it happened! Man was empty, forlorn and part of the lonely crowd. In his extremity he turned his face toward God. When he did he became aware of the Holy Spirit. Attuned by modern literature and television to the finding of an answer to the momentous problems of life in a few pages or within a thirty minute period, he emphasized the miraculous and sought Christian character in a single encounter rather than by the discipline of years and the slow process of maturity.

Thus the test of the reception of the Spirit was made gifts bestowed by the Spirit rather than fruit borne by the Spirit. A gift can be appropriated in a moment. Fruit results from planting followed by nurture and growth. "The farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient over it until it receives the early and late rain. You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand" (James 5:7, 8). Modern man did not want to wait. He was not conditioned to patience. Establishment took too long.

Spiritually illiterate persons, untutored in the word of God and untaught in the revelation of heaven, began to call upon God. They were joined by an increasing number of theological students whose hearts were parched and dry because of the husks upon which they had been fed. Clergymen in various parties were soon involved and took the leadership in directing others into what was designated "a Holy Spirit experience." The wave swept over sectarian barriers until Catholics and Protestants alike were meeting freely together.

It is not a strange phenomenon that when men become deadly serious and invoke the help of God with tears and inner turmoil that something happens. The depth of human personality is so profound that it is impossible to probe it without resultant experience, a shaking of the inner being. Everywhere men and women began to testify to great changes wrought in their lives. Many of them, although by no means all, alleged that the moment of contact with the divine was accompanied by physical symptoms. A charge like an electric current vibrated through their bodies. There was a tingling of every nerve. Their tongues pronounced unintelligible sounds which were taken to be ecstatic language, unearthly, other-worldly, perhaps heavenly.

The word charismatic began to be heard. This term, which simply means "a gift of grace" took on certain overtones. It was said that we had entered a "charismatic age." Before long those who testified to a mystical encounter resulting in a manifestation of unidentifiable sounds began to speak of a "charismatic fellowship," referring primarily to the drawing together, and the drawing apart of those who had "spoken in tongues," or who claimed a gift such as prophecy, healing, or ability to work miracles.

The effect upon the existing sects composed of those who professed faith in Jesus as the Son of God and Savior of men was generally traumatic. All such sects which have existed more than one generation have a tradition. The forms which the fathers devised by which to express worship to God are handed down and become crystallized and inflexible. The once proud expression "Rome never changes" could have been applied in some degree to every religious establishment. But now a completely new challenge had arisen. It came not from without but from within.

As usual, the reaction of the sheltered, socially-accepted religious establishment was sudden and sharp. Sects which had

developed a legalistic approach to the scriptures and which had the Spirit properly and safely catalogued and confined by their interpretative process, announced that the whole thing was Satan-inspired to lure the unwary away from God. With characteristic assertiveness and caught up in the "either-or" fallacy which leaves no room for alternatives it was announced that it had to come from either God or the devil. Since it came to persons outside the party who were not orthodox, it could not come from God, therefore, it was of Satan.

Others declared that the "experiences" were not real. They were mental aberrations of the highly emotional individuals who imagined God had spoken to or through them. Such individuals deserved more pity than censure, although they received a good deal more of the latter, since those who tend to be like the Pharisees are much more adept at censure than at compassion.

These hasty objections did not seem to describe the existing situation. In the first place, there could be no denial that many of those who testified to a personal encounter with the Spirit were notably changed. Some who had never prayed in the presence of others, or even privately, became bold and open in their prayer life. Their new lifestyle was manifest even in public where, in large and pretentious restaurants, they bowed their heads and reverentially thanked God for meals which they once ate with no thought that food is a witness of God's care. Business men who previously would never refer to Jesus in meetings with their associates now testified of their faith at the beginnings of workshops and seminars. Families which had been on the verge of disintegration were welded together. This is hardly the work of Satan. Surely he is too clever to fashion a weapon which could be used to destroy his malign influence.

Regardless of the origin of the personality-shaking experience it was real to those who underwent it. Whether it was the welling up of the previously unprobed depth of one's emotional being, or the response on the soul-level of rationality

to a crisis situation, or an actual confrontation with the Spirit of God, the result was the same. And if it was not the latter it was one more proof that the Spirit can take the mistakes of an honest seeker after God and weave them into the fabric of God's design.

Any strange and novel phenomenon produces real problems in closely confined and closed-end institutions, and this one was no exception. In all too many instances those whose lives had taken on new meaning felt obligated to testify to others who were neither sympathetic toward nor ready for their testimony. The cleavage which often resulted was not just from one side. Those who felt they knew the truth of the Spirit began to vie with those who felt they had the truth in the Spirit. Once again the division condemned by the Spirit occurred in some areas and hostility and bitterness resulted. This only crystallized the parties in opposition as it always does.

The result is that any person who now seeks to speak without "taking sides" is regarded with suspicion by all. In spite of this it seems to me that one who has a firm love for the scriptures and for the Spirit as the revealing Agent, and who receives every child of God as his brother and sister regardless of mystical experience or lack of it, might well speak in a cautionary spirit to help maintain the bond of peace in which atmosphere the unity of the Spirit flourishes. None of us can write upon a controversial issue wholly without a mental slant. That must be understood, accepted and properly evaluated by those who read. No one is wholly objective on any theme to which he gives serious thought.

In an attitude of concern for the whole body of Christ I am going to suggest a few critical observations. My hope is, that by doing so, I can make it possible for all to share in the marvelous adventure of the Spirit-filled and Spirit-guided life. It is my conviction, which is borne out by the scriptures as I understand them, that it is the divine purpose for every believer to possess the Spirit and to be strengthened by His might, but it was never

the design of God to bestow the gift of tongues or any other single gift upon all. This leads to the ultimate conclusion that the proof of the indwelling Spirit is not a special gift but the bearing of fruit.

1. I think it is a serious mistake to regard some of the saints of God as charismatic to the exclusion of others. Every person in Christ is charismatic for the simple reason that all are recipients of a gift of grace. No one who shares in the rich and abundant grace of God is excluded from the riches and abundance. It is probably a useless exercise in arithmetic to try and count the gifts of grace because there is no indication they have all been enumerated and identified. Every such gift has been freely bestowed in order that the one possessing it may function to the building up of the body. Any enabling endowment of God which contributes in any sense or degree to the betterment of the saints is a charismatic gift, and there are no useless or non-functioning members of the body as God looks at them.

In Romans 12:3-8 the apostle speaks of "gifts that differ according to the grace given unto us." The word for gifts is *charismata.* **Included in the list are prophecy, service, teaching, exhorting, contributing, rendering aid and doing acts of mercy. All of these are gifts of God. When we come to see that one who renders any service to another is charismatic, we will not need to make the distinction. It should not be forgotten that this statement occurs in a context which specifically declares that "in one body we have many members, and all members have not the same function." Nor should it be lightly regarded that the whole section is addressed to "every one among you."**

2. In this same vein it is an error to speak of this as "a charismatic age" unless we mean to include the whole Christian era starting with the first proclamation of the Good News about Jesus. There has never been a time when the body of Christ has not functioned through the gifts of its members. There is no such

thing as "a charismatic age" because there is no such thing as "a non-charismatic age." The Spirit is no more alive now that He has ever been. He has always been active and the body has lived because He has been alive in it. Such expressions as "the Spirit has started to move," which imply that He has been lazy and immobile, are not commendatory. It may be that men are beginning to move in response to the Spirit and for that we should be grateful. But God has never withdrawn the Spirit from the body.

3. Certainly one should not be guilty of nit-picking. He should not major in minors. This creates a problem in communication because one man's major is another man's minor, and vice versa. I am quite convinced that it is a mistake to refer to what is happening as a "Pentecostal experience." What happened on Pentecost was unique. It will not be repeated. On this day, when the Jews brought the firstfruits of their wheat harvest to present before the Lord in the form of baked loaves of bread, God gathered together the firstfruits of his harvest of souls from the field of the world.

Speaking in various languages was not the important thing. It was simply the means for attracting attention and drawing together the multitude. It was the message of Peter which was important. What the people saw and heard was validation of the great fact that the one whom they had crucified had been exalted to the right hand of God and received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit (Acts 2:33). Surely this need not again be ratified. A second Pentecost would be an admission that the first was a failure. It would not be a demonstration of faith but a testimony to unbelief.

What happens today in the repetition of esoteric phrases and unidentifiable sounds has no relationship at all to what transpired on Pentecost. Upon that occasion the apostles spoke in "other tongues," that is, in foreign languages. Some seventeen different areas of the world were represented by those present

and each person heard the apostles speak in his own language. It was described by them as "his own native language" and "our own tongues." For this reason, those who now claim "the gift of tongues," refer to the gifts at Corinth as the basis for what is referred to as ecstatic tongues, a term which has no scriptural counterpart. Modern claimants should refer to theirs as "a Corinthian experience" to be consistent.

It is not our purpose herein to be critical of believers in any particular sect, although we are desperately opposed to all sectism, as a work of the flesh (Galatians 5:20). But mention should be made of those who operate under the title of Assembly of God Pentecostal. There is but one body of Christ upon earth. It contains all of the saved upon earth. Not one is outside of it. It is the assembly of the gathered ones, the community of the reconciled, the kingdom of God's dear Son. It was born upon Pentecost. Every child of God in our world can look back to Pentecost which the apostles called "the beginning." From the standpoint of origin one sect is not Pentecostal to the exclusion of the rest of the members of the one body. What began upon Pentecost was not a sect and the proliferation of sects since that day is a scandal to the cross and to the message upon Pentecost.

4. Speaking in tongues was never the proof of one's justification and acceptance by God, nor of the indwelling Spirit. There were many in the one body while the apostles were upon earth who did not possess this singular gift, and there is no record that any person ever prayed to receive it, or that others prayed that he might. In Corinth where it is said that the saints were "not lacking in any spiritual gift," it is distinctly said that while one was given "various kinds of tongues," others were recipients of various other manifestations or "varieties of gifts." Indeed the question is asked "Do all speak in tongues?" (1 Corinthians 12:30) and the obvious answer is in the negative.

There is so much more which could be said, and perhaps needs to be said on this aspect of our theme. I will forbear lest I

appear too negative toward those of God's precious children who are caught up in the current emphasis upon the gifts of the Spirit. I do not want to appear in the role of an attacker, but it needs to be pointed out that there are very grave problems about "the charismatic movement" in the minds of many deep and reverential students of the revealed word of God. These cannot be dismissed as mere "kill-joys" or ecclesiastical "sticks in the mud." It is valid to insist that human experiences be tested in the light of God's word and not the reverse. What the Holy Spirit has said is as important as what it is affirmed the Spirit is doing.

In the final analysis the faith must stand upon objective truth which is capable of being examined and verified by historical process, and not upon subjective experience which cannot be validated. Inward feelings and emotional reactions are not a criterion for measurement of truth. One can be as happy or sad from believing a lie as from believing a truth. What I believe happened to me may prove to be a source of inward blessing but my experience can never be the ground of another's faith.

This was brought home to me quite forcefully by a recent occurrence. Two young women came to our home and introduced themselves as "sisters" representing the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints with headquarters in Salt Lake City, Utah. I had often been visited by young men mistakenly calling themselves "elders," and engaged them in spirited but good-natured conversation. In every instance when they were being backed into a verbal corner one would look at his wristwatch and stand up and say they had an appointment and would have to leave at once. It had happened so often and in exactly the same fashion that it was obvious it was a developed technique for "getting off the hook" when the going became rough.

But this was the first time I had been visited by young women engaged in carrying out the two year missionary stint

and it was very interesting. The initial approach with the leading questions was the same and I could even anticipate what was coming next. At what I thought was the proper juncture I gently and smilingly interposed that I could never become a Mormon. When questioned as to my reasons I pointed out that they recognized three books in addition to the Bible as being inspired of God, but all three were self-contradictory, contradictory of each other, and all directly contradictory of the Bible. After being challenged to produce a contradiction I produced five of the easier and simpler ones. Upon being confronted with these, the "sisters" were visibly shaken, but the older of the two girls said, "But I have had an inner experience which confirms them as true."

I pointed out that if it took such a phenomenon before she could believe in the veracity of the records, after having been reared to believe in them from infancy, she could not expect anyone else to accept them who had not had a kindred experience. I then affirmed that documents of the nature of those produced by Joseph Smith, Parley P. Pratt, and their contemporaries, would have to be self-validating since they were alleged to have been presented by celestial beings and that no amount of subjective experience could either explain or erase a single contradiction in the records themselves. At this point both looked at their watches and said almost in unison, "You must excuse us. We have an appointment and we must leave at once or we will be late." There are laws of evidence by which facts must be established by testimony in order to be credible, and what a witness feels has nothing to do with the situation. It is not subject to cross-examination and is not admissible as evidence.

The Holy Spirit is not divisive but unitive. Peace is the fruit of the Spirit but strife is a work of the flesh. I propose to receive all of my brethren, not because of the gifts they claim, but because God has claimed us all as His own. Every Christian has received the Spirit. He is God's birthday gift together with the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38). The Spirit has been given to all

who obey (Acts 5:32). I rejoice in every life that has been purged and purified. I rejoice in every fervent prayer poured out to the Father, whether with hands upraised or not.

I have resolved that I will never make any man's experience to which he testifies, a test of fellowship or communion. But I have also resolved that I will never allow another to make his experience a test of my relationship to the Father. In the first case I would adopt another creed than Christ. In the second I would consent to being judged by another creed than Christ.

This does not deny that if there are those who try to impose a special experience upon all and form a kind of "spiritual-experience clique" to the exclusion of others who are saints, but do not share the experience, separation may become necessary. If it does it will not be because of the personal experience but because of the factionalism created around it. Certainly Paul would have been divisive and destructive if he had begun to advocate that the only place Christ could be met was on the highway south of Damascus and then only at high noon. It is here that we may watch with some trepidation the formation of "a charismatic fellowship" which can only end in a charismatic sect.

There is room in Christ for men of various degrees of knowledge and of varied opinions. There is room for those of diverse opinions. But there is no room for division. The body of Christ is composed of many parts, but not of many parties. To give partisan allegiance to a charismatic position would be no different than to devote it to circumcision, as was done in the first century community of believers. Of course, the Holy Spirit does not create division. He is the divine agent of reconciliation and unity. We may be sure that when division occurs in the family of God it is not the work of the Spirit but the result of misguided zeal upon the part of those whose ambition is greater than their concern for their brethren.

Speaking in tongues, whether a genuine gift of the Holy Spirit or the projection of a deeply devoted and searching human spirit can never become a test or proof of discipleship. The longest treatise on tongue-speaking in the new covenant scriptures was because of an abuse of the gift. It was climaxed with the pointing out of a more excellent way. That way is the way of love. Without love every gift is childish and every sacrifice empty. It was our Lord Himself who said, "By this will all men know you are my disciples, if you love one another." We need to learn and practice the more excellent way.

Having written this, I now propose to deal with the real adventure of the Spirit which enriches life upon earth and lifts us out of the drudgery and despair caused by sin. Whether the special gifts of the Spirit are now attainable or not will have little bearing upon our theme. We may allow theologians to discuss the fine points of miraculous bestowals while we slake our thirst at the fountain which Jesus promised would not only flow to us, but also through us.

Then and Now

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The Holy Spirit has always been not only a mystery, but also a problem to man. Caught up as he is in a realm of the flesh and doomed to inescapable death, it is difficult for man to accept a rational view of the supernatural. In the days when Jesus was upon the earth, the two principal sects of the Jews were sharply divided over the matter. The Sadducees flatly denied that there were angels or spirits. They dogmatically asserted there was no such thing as a resurrection or a life beyond physical death. They accepted the five books of Moses, the Torah, as God's revelation to Moses, and defended it, but still they were materialists. The Pharisees also accepted the Torah and believed in spirits and a resurrection, but made void the law of God by their traditions. It is apparent that both groups have representatives on earth today.

The personality of the Spirit seems to be one of the major sources of argument. Those who deny it usually seek to define the Holy Spirit by one of two propositions. They seem to ignore the fact that they have not so much found a way of explaining the Spirit, as of explaining the Spirit away. Let us briefly consider these two approaches.

First, there are those who think of the Spirit as a mere force or quality in the world. He is in a spiritual sense what gravity, electricity, or magnetism are in the natural. All of these are indefinable except in their effects. They are intangible and we cannot be sure how or why they function. "The terms applied

to them are arbitrary ones. It is suggested that the Spirit is also a force moving in the universe beyond the power of science to investigate or the power of the mind to comprehend. To those who thus speculate, the Spirit is the wind of God, mindless and unfeeling, but blowing where and when the mind of God directs.

Those who regard the Spirit as a quality think of Him as a spirit of holiness, just as we speak of someone having a spirit of compassion or a spirit of meekness. In this case the Spirit is an attribute possessed by another, rather than one having attributes or characteristics. Whole religious movements have been built upon the predication that the Holy Spirit is simply the spirit of man, purged, purified and sanctified. In such cases the Spirit has no identity of His own, being identified only through the human spirit when it is affected by the blood of Christ.

Second, there are those who confuse the Spirit with the word of God, and quite frequently with the Bible, as a compilation of revelation first given orally and then committed to writing for preservation. Frequently this confusion is the work of those who have a legalistic view of the letters written by the apostles and who want to enforce their interpretations, deductions and opinions as the very Spirit of God. They do not realize that by making the Spirit the revelation rather than the revealer they actually "outrage the Spirit of grace" to borrow a term from Hebrews 10:29.

An unhealthy view of the scriptures which make them an object of worship, and causes those who view them to become guilty of bibliolatry, leads to a faulty exegesis of the statement of Jesus recorded in John 6:63, "The words that I have spoken unto you are spirit and life." Attention to the immediate context will reveal that Jesus was not affirming that the Holy Sprit was merely the spoken word. He was contrasting the bread and fish which He had provided to feed the multitude for their physical sustenance with the spiritual teaching He had given for eternal life. The first had to be digested and the other believed. "It is the

spirit that gives life, the flesh is of no avail," if we may paraphrase, "The words that I have spoken to you are spiritual in nature, producing life."

The Holy Spirit is not simply an energy, a force, or a power in the world. He is a divine personage as is proven by His associates, attributes and abilities. The student who wants to pursue this phrase more thoroughly is referred to the author's book *Heaven Help Us The Holy Spirit in Your Life Today.* **It was written for the purpose of establishing by the scriptures the identity and uniqueness of the Spirit as a personality. In this treatise we will simply proceed upon the ground that the Spirit is thus identified in the scriptures.**

Can every child of God be so directly related to the Spirit that he may share in the power and blessings bestowed by the Spirit? Before we answer directly let us be aware of the fact that the Holy Spirit has not always functioned in the same manner. Sometimes very small words in the scriptures have a great impact. Two such words are "then" and "now." These occasionally are used to mark two periods of time with the cross of Christ as the dividing point. The Holy Spirit did not operate *then* **as He does** *now.* **The coming of Christ made the difference. Before His advent the Spirit operated on a more selective and limited basis.**

Certain individuals received the Spirit to enable them to perform their assigned functions but the body of those under the law had no individual and personal relationship with the Spirit. When Moses was taken up into the heights of Mount Sinai and shown a pattern of the tabernacle God wanted built, God called Bezaleel of the tribe of Judah, and Aholiab of the tribe of Dan, and filled them with His Spirit (Exodus 31:3). They were inspired to carve, engrave, weave and make furniture. At the same time it appears that the natural talents and abilities of others were sharpened and stirred up to act as assistants to the master craftsmen.

The prophets received their revelations through the Holy Spirit. "God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets" (Hebrews 1:1). "No prophecy ever came by the impulse of man, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God" (2 Peter 1:21). It was "the Spirit of Christ within them" who predicted "the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glory" (1 Peter 1:10). The scriptures of the old covenant are God's revelation. Jesus regarded them as such and we should do the same. Any attempt to derogate the scriptures of the old covenant and to make it appear that they are merely the interpretation of current events by the prophets themselves is an affront to Christ.

All during the time of the prophets God was predicting the day would come when He would put His Spirit in the hearts of all His people. A new covenant was to be made. It was to be unlike the covenant made at Sinai. It would not be engraved upon stone tablets. Its guiding principles or rules of action were to be written upon the inner consciousness. The heart and mind would constitute the sanctuary in which the covenant was kept. The covenant would be a person, the Messiah, whom God would appoint.

"When the time had fully come, God sent forth His Son." The angel Gabriel was sent from God to Nazareth to make the annunciation to Mary, who was a virgin. When Mary enquired how she could bear a child since she had no husband, she was told, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God" (Luke 1:35). The Spirit is identified with the power of God and was to be the divine agent through whom the seed would be conveyed to the body of the virgin, there to impregnate the ovum from her body so conception could take place.

Elizabeth preceded Mary in pregnancy by six months, and when Mary came to visit her in the hill country the babe leaped in Elizabeth's womb when Mary entered the door. Elizabeth was

filled with the Holy Spirit and cried out loudly, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!" When Elizabeth had delivered a son whose name was called John, much to the consternation of her neighbors and relatives, Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and uttered a remarkable prophecy concerning his new offspring.

It is interesting to recall that when Jesus was forty days old, Joseph and Mary took Him to Jerusalem to formally present Him as a firstborn male to the Lord, and to offer the necessary sacrifice for Mary's ceremonial cleansing or purification. When they arrived they met an aged man by the name of Simeon. He was described as righteous and devout and as specifically looking for the consolation of Israel, that is, the Messiah. The Holy Spirit was upon him and had previously revealed to him that he would not die until he had seen the Messiah. Upon the day when Jesus was brought he was inspired by the Spirit to enter the temple where he took the child up in his arms and blessed God and the father and mother. I refer to all of these to indicate that the Spirit was active in the birth and presentation of Jesus.

There is more to it than that. When the time arrived for Jesus to begin His ministry to mankind the Holy Spirit was present in a visible form. Jesus was thirty years old. He traveled from Galilee to the fords of Jordan where John was baptizing. He persuaded John to baptize Him and they walked out into the water together. When He was buried beneath the surface of the flowing stream and brought up again, the Spirit descended in the form of a dove and lighted upon Him. This was a sign previously given to John by which to identify the Son of God. "I myself did not know him; but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God" (John 1:33, 34). This was the divine anointing, and it was accomplished by God and accompanied by His voice from heaven declaring, "This is my

beloved Son with whom I am well pleased."

Jesus affirmed that it was by the Spirit of God He cast out demons. He also reasoned that this was proof the kingdom of God had come upon men. The dispossession of Satan, his dethronement from power over the bodies and hearts of men was proof of the appearance of a superior force (Matthew 12:28, 29). This force would be operative in defence of the ambassadors of the kingdom when they were subjected to arrest and trial before governors and kings. They were to prepare no advance brief. "When they deliver you up, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you" (Matthew 10:19, 20).

Both the manner of speaking and the content were to be under the control of the Spirit. This statement of Jesus is a good definition of what we mean by inspiration. The message to be spoken by the apostles to councils, synagogues, kings and governors was not to be one devised by human rationalization. It was not something which they "figured out" as a good approach to the presentation of the claims of Jesus. They were not to seek for loopholes in the law. There was to be no anxiety in advance, no agonizing over correct phraseology. "What you are to say will be given unto you."

It is, I think, very important that we come to see the message of the apostles for what it is— the word of God. It is not simply a human attempt to explain Jesus to the world. It is not a well thought out apology for One who was loved and accepted as the Messiah. It is not truth dressed in myth, even in the best meaning of that term in modern theological circles. Jesus said, "It is not you who speak, but the Spirit of the Father speaking through you."

In the face of this, it is a little bit incredible for those who profess faith in Jesus, to imply that the only inspiration the

apostles had was that which resulted from their own inward fervency. Even in the heat of passion they were not capable of producing the kind of message we have from them. Those who knew them best were astounded out of their wits on Pentecost when they recognized that ignorant and unlearned Galileans were performing as they did. A blatant unbeliever might reason that despite their lack of training in the art of communication, they delivered themselves nobly under pressure.

But the believer cannot have such an option. Jesus plainly said, "It is not you who speak." He also added, "It is the Spirit of your Father speaking through you." Jesus either told the truth or He did not. If He did we are forced to accept the fact that the apology of the apostles was not originated by themselves, but was a revelation of the Spirit of God. If Jesus did not tell the truth He was not the living Word of God and the disclosure to the apostles was not the revelation of God. And if this be true we are not believers for there is no one in whom to believe.

There was no question in the minds of the apostles as to the source of their message. Paul had no problem on this score. He declared that what could not be learned by observation, hearing or human rationalization as to God's preparation for those who love Him. "God has revealed to us through the Spirit" (1 Corinthians 2:9, 10). Then he said, "And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom, but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who possess the Spirit" (verse 13).

Obviously it is not enough for one who receives and delivers a message to assign its origin to a divine source. The one to whom the message is addressed must also credit it to God, or it will appear to him as merely a piece of human philosophy. Under such circumstances it will demand no more serious attention than any other propaganda thought out by good communicators. The apostle knew the importance of a proper attitude upon the part of those who heard them. No more

positive proof of this can be found than in a statement made to the Thessalonians, "And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers" (1 Thess. 2:13).

There can be no doubt that the Spirit of God was active in the life and work of Jesus on earth. His birth was predicted by the Spirit, His entrance into the world of human need was anointed by the Spirit, His mighty works were done by the power of the Spirit, and the record of them transmitted by the Spirit through human agents called and chosen for the task.

But all during His movement upon earth Jesus held forth great promises of the Spirit who would come to believers, enriching their lives, strengthening their resolves and leading them on to certain victory. He affirmed that great as were His mighty works, His disciples would do greater because He returned to the Father. I shall limit my discussion of the promises of Jesus to two occasions. The first is recorded by John in chapter seven of his record of the life of Jesus as we have divided it for our convenience.

The entire section deals with events related to the feast of tabernacles or shelters. This was the third of the annual harvest festivals occurring in conjunction with the gathering of the vintage. During the days of celebration the Jewish families were required to live outside their homes in temporary shelters constructed of tree branches and palm fronds. It was a time of great joy but also of daily pomp and circumstance with priestly ritual in the temple courtyard.

The presence of Jesus at the festival was the occasion of a considerable stir. Some defended him as a good man while others argued that he was a deceiver and dangerous. When He invaded the temple to teach publicly He became the subject of a

great deal of public muttering and gossip. The stage was set for Him to make a pronouncement which would have a tremendous impact. He did so on the final day of the feast.

Each day thousands of Jews in attendance brought branches of trees which they waved toward the altar during the singing of the *Hallel* by the well-trained Levitical choir. During the ceremony a priest poured water from the pool of Siloam which had been carried to the site in a golden pitcher. The water was solemnly poured out by the side of the altar. On the last day of the festival this ceremony was made even more impressive. The priests brought twice as much water from the famous pool. Just as the first words of Psalm 118 were chanted— "O give thanks unto the Lord"— they appeared at the Water Gate and marched toward the altar. Upon arrival at the altar they marched around it seven times in memory of the toppling of the walls of Jericho so that the city could become the firstfruits of Palestinian conquest.

Then the water was ceremoniously poured out while waves of religious emotion swept over the vast audience which filled the court of the people. It was at this time Jesus daringly stood up and cried out, "If any one thirst, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as scripture has said, 'Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water.'" John recorded these words long afterwards and he adds the explanation, "Now this he said about the Spirit, which those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified."

One does not need to be a profound thinker to recognize the tremendous import of this statement of Jesus upon our relationship with the divine. It is a prescription for the satisfaction of our deepest human need and the solution to our most profound problem in the human perspective. We should think about its implications for our lives and our world in orderly fashion.

1. There is within every person a longing, a desire for that which is beyond. The spirit is in one sense a captive of the flesh because it is only by wearing such a garment as the flesh that the human spirit can exist and function in this kind of material realm. Just as a diver who works at great depths of the ocean, or an astronaut who walks upon other planets, must wear a special suit adapted to the environment, so the spirit must be garbed in a body composed of cells and tissues in order to function in the atmosphere of earth.

But there is a yearning of the spirit for freedom which can never be satisfied by the flesh. As pleasurable as eating, and sex, and companionship may be, they can never be the full end of happiness. Digestion falters, desire fails and dear ones depart. Man was not made for time alone and he dreams of transcendence. It is this craving or pang which Jesus refers to as thirst.

It was a fortunate figure of speech. Those who were present for the festival were thoroughly grounded in a knowledge of the scriptures. They knew the beautiful forty-second psalm in which David described the panting of his soul for God by the panting of a weary deer for the water brooks, and went on to say, "My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God." Nor would they forget the lovely sixty-third psalm in which David cries, "My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is." Thirst represents the acute pang of one who is dehydrating, whose tissues are burning up, whose tongue is cleaving to the roof of his mouth. And spiritual thirst is a burning desire for satisfaction in the Eternal One.

It is significant that Jesus interrupted a religious ceremony with all of its traditional trappings to make His public announcement. The day upon which He spoke was "the great day" of the festival. It was at the climax of the week of living in the outdoors in booths. Ritualistic regulations governed every

phase of the occasion. Included in the branches used for the shelters must be palm fronds and willows cut by a brook. The sides had to be woven but not close enough to exclude the sunlight. The roof had to be thatched but in such a way the stars could be seen at night.

The water from the pool of Siloam had to be carried in a golden pitcher and only by members of the priestly caste. The priests entered the gate at a precise moment, clued in by the great blast from the priestly trumpet. Their processional to the altar was with "measured beat and slow." As the water was being poured out the huge congregation of worshipers waved their palm fronds and willow branches above their heads while shouting, "Hallelujah." It was a time of fervor and excitement. And it was then the voice of the Teacher from despised Nazareth rang out above the din.

"If any one thirst, let him come to me, and drink!" Was there intended to be a contrast between the pompous pageantry and priestly performance, and simply coming to Christ? If so, the followers of Jesus have miserably failed to preserve the distinctive. They have incorporated into their "worship" all of the trappings of Judaism and have added thereto and multiplied what are called "Christian traditions" until once again the face of God is obscured by waving branches and the words of God drowned out by creedal shouting. The thirsty soul is summoned from empty rites to come to Christ, to forsake the formalism for the fountain of light and life.

2. The invitation is universal. It is issued to the thirsty because no one else will come. A cup of cold water means nothing to one who is intoxicated. And so long as men and women are caught up in the giddy whirl with their feverish brains on fire with the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life, the call will not be heard. But when the cold gray dawn breaks, and the heart is filled with shame, remorse and guilt, there is a possibility the call will be heard.

It is not a matter of "coming to church" but of coming to Christ. One may do the first and go away thirstier than when he came. The problem is that "the church" in our day is also thirsty. It has often mixed dogma and opinion into the cup it has passed to the dying and their thirst has been intensified. Man cannot be satisfied by human creeds, confessions or ceremonies. These are the soft drinks bottled by religious institutions and flavored with their varied additives. They will not slake the thirst of the soul. Only Jesus can do that! And if anyone is thirsty he is invited! Anyone! Red, yellow, black or white! Rich or poor! Bond or free! Jew or non-Jew! No one need to be thirsty any longer. The fountain has been opened!

3. Coming to Jesus is believing in Jesus. This does not mean accepting Him as a historical figure, although He is certainly that. But one may believe He was born in Bethlehem, lived in Capernaum, and died in Jerusalem, exactly as he may believe that Benjamin Franklin was born in Boston and lived and died in Philadelphia. This will not quench your thirst. It is not knowing where Jesus lived on earth but knowing that He lives in your heart that makes the difference. One may visit the holy land with an unholy heart.

Believing in Jesus is not merely giving mental or intellectual assent to the superiority and validity of His teachings. Jesus is not simply a philosopher or a lover of wisdom, although He is that. He is wisdom embodied. To the saints in one of the ancient haunts of philosophers, the city of Corinth, Paul wrote that God had made Him "Our wisdom, our righteousness and consecration and redemption." He is not simply a person with wisdom but wisdom that is a person.

Jesus is not merely a prophet although He is one. But a prophet is one who reveals the word of God, while Jesus is the Word of God revealed. He is not just something revealed, He is the revealer. Prophecy was transmitted, but Jesus is the transmitter. What does it mean to believe in Him so that one

becomes a genuine partaker of His life, suffering, death and resurrection? Obviously the belief under consideration is one which leads to identification with its object. It is a faith so powerful, a trust so magnificent that it actually consumes the believer and melts him into a state of oneness with Him in whom the trust is imposed. It is good to remember that the word commit in several passages in our English version is identical in the original with the word rendered believe. To commit oneself to a cause is to surrender himself unreservedly to it. To commit himself to a person is to place implicit trust in that person. It is possible that no definition we can construct will be wholly adequate to explain in its fulness what it means to believe in Jesus. We experience that we cannot always confine by words. We know that believing, as He spoke of it, involves trust and commitment, and this makes our relationship true and valid.

4. The promise of Jesus is that those who come to Him parched and dry, will not only have their thirst satisfied, but will become fountains of blessing to others. God is a specialist in causing rivers to run where there has been a dearth of water. Twice Moses smote a rock and from its inward depths a refreshing stream gushed forth to satisfy the sharp craving of his murmuring followers. Belief in Jesus is a transforming phenomenon. Hearts that were as arid as Death Valley become like a garden of flowers. The desert blossoms as a rose.

So certain is this that there is a real question as to whether they really believe whose hearts continue sterile and unproductive. If sorrow and sighing are to flee away but they still remain, if joy and gladness are to supplant them and yet they are never manifested, does the heart really believe? What a blessing it is to be in the presence of one whose life has been completely transformed, where old things have passed away and all things have become new. We are not meant to be cisterns but fountains. We are not to be satisfied with merely taking in but we must be giving forth.

5. Fortunately John was writing this after the glorification of Jesus. He had learned by experience the significance of the promise of Jesus. So he could explain, "Now this he said about the Spirit, which those who believed in him were to receive." The thirsty soul is invited to imbibe of the Spirit. It is the Spirit who acts like a cold draught of reviving water to assuage burning thirst. The Spirit renews, revives and resuscitates. There is no revival without the Spirit of God. "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body— Jews or Greeks, slaves or free— and all were made to drink of one Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:13).

Notice the word "all." Everyone who has come into the divine organism, the one body, drinks of the one Spirit. He who does not dies. The body of Christ upon earth can no more survive without partaking of the Spirit than the human body can continue to exist without liquid. All who believe in Jesus in the sense in which Jesus used it of coming to Him, receive the Spirit. The reception of the Spirit is the seal of our acceptance with the Father. "Any one who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him" (Romans 8:9).

In the form of a Helper or Comforter the Spirit could not be given every believer while Jesus was present on earth in the flesh. As a Counselor the Spirit would come to attest to the glorification of Jesus upon His coronation in Heaven. He would bring assurance that the Son of God had been exalted to the throne at the right hand of the Father. This would confirm the right to act in His name and by His authority. Jesus plainly declared, "I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go I will send him to you" (John 16:7).

Jesus has now been glorified and magnified. Ten days after His ascension from the Mount of Olives the Holy Spirit came with audible and visual demonstration, so that Simon Peter could say, "Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit,

he has poured out this which you see and hear" (Acts 2:33). In conformity with the promise made by Jesus on the last day of the Festival of Shelters, every believer now has the Spirit dwelling within as a divine gift. Those who are in Christ do not need to seek the Spirit. They possess Him.

This poses a real question. If believers possess the Spirit where are the rivers of living water which were to flow from their hearts? The answer is that many believers exhibit the abundant joy, the glorious dynamic, and the faith that rests in the power of God. They are an inspiration and a blessing to all who come into their presence. But there are others who are critical and censorious. They live shallow lives and constantly engage in self-pity. Yet if they have been born again the Spirit dwells in them. The problem is that they have quenched the Spirit. They have dammed up the river and filled the fountain with debris.

The hope for such persons is that, like the prodigal, they will come to themselves and forsake the pig-pen for the palace. If they can be encouraged to overcome their selfishness and to rise above their doubts they can become a source of encouragement to all. They can live longer, enjoy the marvelous grace of God and transform the neighborhood where they reside.

I grew up in the Missouri Ozarks. This was a land of rugged pioneers and despite the encroachment of modern ways one can still see the visible reminders of the life of a simpler age. One such sign of yesteryear are the old water mills, a few of which grind corn on old stone burrs while the creaking wheel turns as the water pouring down the flume from the pond fills its troughs. But there are other mills that have fallen into decay. The power is still there but the mill race has become choked with branches, leaves and sediment. There is no sound of grinding, no service to mankind.

It is the same with many lives I know. The Spirit is there

with ability to strengthen with might in the inner man. There could be the fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. But the Father forces no one to utilize the divine gift. He bestows but does not belabor! Yet if there are those who read this, and are tired of shriveled and circumscribed lives, they can find a sense of being never before attained. Let them call upon God to help them clean out the mill race, and the waters from above will again begin to flow. Rivers of living water flowing from and through the heart.

No child of God need be overcome by circumstances. God is greater than any circumstance. He is greater than any problem. There is no grief He cannot assuage, no sorrow He cannot allay. One can be beaten only by relinquishing His hold upon God. The Spirit lives in us, abides with us, shares with us as a Friend, a Helper, a Comforter, a Counselor. The trusting heart which accepts this as a fact will be blessed.

At a crucial time during the Civil War when dark clouds of foreboding hung over the land, Governor Yates sat down and wrote a letter filled with despair to President Lincoln. The reply was brief. It simply said, "Dick, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord." What a source of courage lies in the words, "Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world."

The story is told of a young painter who was not satisfied with his work. He borrowed the brush of his teacher and asked permission to use it. The painting which resulted was not an improvement over his previous attempts. A friend remarked to him, "It is not the master's brush you need, but the master's spirit." Those who have the spirit of the Master can use their own gifts to produce masterpieces.

The Other Helper

Contents

It was John, the former fisherman, who was selected to divulge the information about the coming of the Spirit as "the other Comforter," as promised by Jesus. In so doing he reached the summit of revelation as to God's provision for His children during the absence of Jesus from the earth. Of course, John did not divide his record into chapters and verses. That feat was probably accomplished by the French editor Robert Estienne, and legend has it that he did it while fleeing on horseback from Paris to Lyons, in 1549.

Regardless of who did it, or when, the way we now have it divided leaves chapters 14-16 a "Cape of Good Hope" for the sailors on life's turbulent sea. It is the answer of Jesus to troubled hearts. It is the compassionate provision for those who cannot "go it alone." It was originally spoken to the apostles, who were disconsolate at the announcement that Jesus would soon leave them and that where He was going they could not go. Because of this there are those who limit to the apostles what was said of the Spirit.

All such overlook the fact that these men were disciples as well as apostles, and before they were apostles. What Jesus promised them in their role as apostles applied only to them, but what was promised as disciples belongs to all disciples until the Lord returns. Just as certain blessings of the Spirit were required by the apostles to enable them to fulfill their mission as apostles, so other blessings are required by disciples, or

followers of Jesus, to enable them to live meaningfully as disciples. The power of the Spirit is enabling power, and whatever God requires of us He supplies the power to perform it. It is a tragic error to restrict the possession and indwelling of the Spirit to the apostles alone.

Jesus said, "I will not leave you desolate, I will come to you" (John 14:18). The word He used which has here been translated "desolate" is the Greek *orphanos.* **It literally means "without a father." But, among the ancients it was also used of students or disciples who had lost a master by death. The relationship of a master to his disciples was very close and real. Often they lived in the same abode, ate at the same table, and shared their lives. The master did not conduct formal classes but talked with his followers as they walked along the road, or sat down in the marketplace. To lose a beloved teacher was like being bereft of a father.**

I do not think Jesus was talking about his resurrection when He promised to come again to them. If He was the promise was good only for the forty days He was with them before His ascension, and then they were desolate again. I think He was speaking of the coming of the Holy Spirit who was to dwell in God's children forever, that is, during the age when Jesus was absent. When the Spirit dwells in one it is the equivalent of having God and Christ move into his life to make their home with him. Immediately after saying that the Spirit will dwell with those who love Jesus and manifest their love by obedience, He says, "If a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him" (John 14:24).

It is a sad commentary on what has happened to the faith that so many who claim to love Jesus are frustrated, frightened and forlorn. Many who attend what we designate "religious services" regularly are lonely and empty. They are sick and scared. They not only are unable to love their enemies but they

entertain festering hostilities and bitterness toward those with whom they meet. They act as orphans who have been cast adrift with no hope and no one to care.

What has happened? The answer appears obvious. We have been betrayed by those who seek to maintain and perpetuate their systems into substituting public ritualism for personal relationship. It is difficult to be loyal to a system because the very acts by which one seeks to express his allegiance become mechanical, stereotyped and routine. The frenzied attempts to pump life into them prove exhausting and discouraging.

There is a vast difference between the act of arising on Sunday to drive to a "holy place" to watch "acts of worship" performed by skilled professionals trained in the art, and coming together as a Spirit-filled family around the thanksgiving table set by a loving Father, to share experiences and recount victories. The difference was brought home to me recently when I was scheduled to speak one night in a "religious" structure. The song director went through all kinds of contortions, and engaged in all kinds of pleading, cajoling and clowning, to get the people to loosen up and smile. He did manage to get a few of them to grin embarrassingly but it was quite apparent they were just smiling on the outside.

The next evening our whole family gathered at the home of our son. Three generations sat down together at the table. Heads were bowed in fervent prayer as one of our number expressed in non-stilted fashion our deep appreciation to a benevolent Father whose gracious providence had preserved and kept us unto that moment. After we had dined, one of the group dug out a pile of old hymn-books and we began to sing as we used to do when the children were little. For two hours we continued until our throats became husky and our voices were strained and we had to cease. It was spontaneous, effervescent and joyous. We loved every minute of it, and even when we had to say our farewells

and leave we were still humming the refrains as we drove along the highway.

There is a feeling expressed by many in our day that we ought to abandon what we refer to as "the church." They regard it as dead and feel that it should be buried. I disagree. This attitude reflects a kind of cynical viewpoint which seems to underestimate the power of God. Certainly there are a lot of forms, fixtures, methods and traditions, which need to be cleared out. They have no relevance to our age or what we are called to do in it. They are barnacles which need to be scraped off the hull of the Ship of Zion. But even a dead body can be raised to life, and if "the church" has been wrapped in its graveclothes as was Lazarus, it needs to hear a voice calling "Come forth!"

Actually, our problem is quite simple. Under the impact of western culture we have been deluded and seduced into becoming a corporate structure consisting of shareholders whose right to vote is spelled out in the company by-laws. We are a legalistic institution with a judiciary consisting of elders and preachers interpreting statutes in the light of precedents established by our fathers and now incorporated as principles from which there can be no variance except at the cost of excommunication, excision and boycott. We should not be surprised that many of our meetings are as cold as a stockbrokers convention before the cocktail hour.

We have no consciousness of being a community of the reconciled and consequently no realization that we are a reconciling community. In fact "members of the church" often fight harder and more frequently than others in an area, and while the "pagans" are uniting to support causes of public concern the Christians are dividing and assaulting each other verbally and openly. There is often as much gossip, enmity, strife, jealousy and selfishness manifested among those who never miss a meeting as among those who have never "darkened the door" of a religious structure. This leads to the conclusion

that Satan probably does not care how many "join the church" provided they act like many of those already in it. They do not fight him any more in the church than they did in the world!

To imply there is a simple solution to this is to lay oneself open to the charge of being an irresponsible dreamer. But we have made our situation more complex and aggravated by seeking sophisticated answers. We have talked about "the psychology of this and that" and argued about "the theology" of one thing and another until we have become bogged down in a welter of conflicting ideas, none of which touch the basic issue. The church is not an organization but an organism. It is not a business but a body.

A body without the spirit is dead. To revive a dead body the spirit must again return to it. It is not enough to arrange the limbs in a different fashion, or to rouge the cheeks. It will still be a corpse. Putting a Bible in the hand of a dead man will not revive him. Nothing that is done externally will restore life. It may make a more beautiful or attractive corpse but it will still be a corpse. Jesus knew this and He promised the Spirit with His life-giving power.

I may be mistaken when I suggest that the only way the Holy Spirit dwells in the spiritual body is by dwelling in those who are members of it. It was to these the Spirit was promised, for only these could be orphaned by the return of Jesus to glory. He said, "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever" (John 14:16).

Jesus could not abide with us through the age which began with His coming. He said, "I tell you the truth, it is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you" (John 16:7). From a human viewpoint, it would appear that it would be much more profitable and beneficial to the disciples that Jesus remain with them in the flesh. But God

knew better. If Jesus thus remained He would suffer the limitations of time and space. The Holy Spirit knows no such restriction. He can dwell in God's people universally.

When Jesus was on earth those who wanted to see Him had to travel to where He was. But the Spirit comes to us wherever we are. Speaking of His works, Jesus said, "Greater works than these shall you do, because I go unto the Father." The Spirit could not come until Jesus was glorified. That glorification was the final act of validation of His Sonship. The coming of the Spirit was confirmatory proof it had occurred and the Good News was ready to be heralded to the whole world. The coming of the Spirit was more expedient than for Jesus to remain in the flesh. A realization of this will silence every tongue which would speak derogatorily of the Spirit and His impact upon the disciples.

The Holy Spirit came as a result of prayer to the Father by His Son. In reality, the Spirit always comes, not only by the will of God, but by the action of God. Jesus recognized the sovereignty of the Father by petitioning Him to send the Spirit, yet He participated in the action for He said, "If I go away I will send him unto you." One who possesses the Spirit possesses a gift of God and His Son. To honor the gift is to honor the givers. That we have been made the recipients of the Holy Spirit while in the flesh is a marvelous and astounding thing. It is the ultimate in human adventure.

In announcing the advent of the Spirit Jesus used a term which is almost untranslatable by any single word in our western vocabulary. The word *parakletos* literally means to call another to stand beside one for the purpose of aiding or assisting him in resolving a difficulty or in dealing with a problem. In an attempt to capture the general implications of the word, modern translators have resorted to various English terms such as Comforter, Helper, Advocate or Counselor. All of these are too feeble to portray the scope of the influence of the Spirit upon the

life of the believer.

The translators appointed by King James adopted the word "Comforter." In 1611 it may have been the best word available for their purpose. Now, by a turn of those circumstances which constantly affect the languages of mankind the term has altered in meaning until it no longer conveys the meaning which the translators thought to express. In the days of King James a Comforter was one who came to lend strength and reinforce the will to resist. The word "fort" which is contained in it gives some indication of its meaning. It is from the Latin *fortis,* **strong. A fortress is a stronghold.**

In our day a comforter is ordinarily regarded as one who extends sympathy in times of grief or sorrow. He may make a telephone call or send a card of condolence to one who has lost a loved one by death, or he may visit the mortuary and express his concern and sign the register of those who attend a memorial service. All of this is good, and we should all do these things more often than we do. But this has little relationship to a *parakletos,* **which has been translated to become "paraclete" in English. Accordingly, the word "Comforter" is now a misleading term.**

To understand the function of the Holy Spirit as a paraclete we must seek the meaning attached to the word in the days when Jesus was upon earth. It is obvious that His purpose was to enlighten and not to obscure. When He employed the word it conveyed a certain mental image, or set of images, to His hearers. If we can recapture those mental images we can grasp the meaning He sought to convey. What did the Greek world think of when the word *paraclete* **was used by a public speaker?**

The word was used to describe the act of a porter who stood beside one of his fellows on the dock and helped him shoulder a burden which he could not lift alone. Sometimes he would walk beside the man and steady the huge pack with his

own hand. The Holy Spirit is a burden-bearer who walks with us and helps with our loads which are too heavy for us to carry alone.

The word was used to describe an attorney or counselor-at-law who pleaded the case of one who was accused. Such an intermediary gave advice to a client, pleaded for mercy in his behalf, and interceded for him. Such a lawyer was called an advocate in English jurisprudence. That is the reason why this word is used to translate *parakletos* in the only instance in which it is applied to someone other than the Spirit. John is the only writer who uses the word and he writes, "But if we sin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." The Holy Spirit is one of two intercessors pleading for mercy to be extended because of our weakness. One who does not have the Holy Spirit is left to plead his case alone and the conclusion is foregone. But those who have the Spirit have an intercessor living in themselves and another seated at the right hand of God.

The word was used to describe a tutor or guardian entrusted with the education and discipline of the child. Frequently this was a faithful slave who had constant care of a child until the father willed that he had attained maturity. The success of the guardian was determined by the character of the child. Greek schools were rigorous and stringent. The permissiveness we know today was wholly unknown in the Greek world. Often the guardian stood beside his youthful charge pointing out his mistakes in calculation and helping him to correct his errors. The Holy Spirit helps us find the solution to our problems and come up with the correct answers.

It is very difficult for many of us to accept the fact of the personhood of the Spirit. The very word "spirit" increases the difficulty. We tend to think of a spectral mass, an influence or a pervading atmosphere. We live in a pragmatic age which wants to see tangible evidence of everything. If we cannot examine it under a microscope or get a computer print-out on it, we assume

it does not exist. Perhaps one of the saddest things to happen is that we walk by sight and not by faith. There is a very grave possibility that what we think of as real may be unreal, and vice versa.

We seem to have no difficulty recognizing the personality of the Father, although we are plainly told by Jesus "God is a Spirit" (John 4:24). The very promise of the Spirit as made by Jesus indicates His divine personhood. "I will pray the Father and he will send you another Comforter (Paraclete)." In the rich and versatile language of the Greeks there are two words for another. The word *heteros* meant "another of a different kind." The word *allos* means "another of the same kind." That is the word employed here. Jesus was a Paraclete (1 John 2:1). The Spirit was to be another Helper like Jesus. It is true that Jesus came in a body while the Spirit dwells in our bodies, making of them His temples (1 Corinthians 6:19). But He is no less real while dwelling in our flesh than was Jesus while in His physical body.

The word "forever" merely means "through the age." One cannot determine the extent of time involved by simply looking at the word. To do that he must determine what age is under consideration. What did Jesus mean when He declared that the Spirit sent by the Father would abide with the disciples forever? He had just been talking with them about His departure from them. He had informed them that He could remain with them only a short time more, and that it would be impossible for them to come where He was going. He told them that He spoke about the Spirit while He was yet with them, but that He was going away to be with the Father.

It would seem that the age of the Spirit's abode with the saints was that in which Jesus was absent. The purpose of sending the Spirit was to guard against their being left desolate or alone. Forever is the age in which the indwelling Spirit abides within us, and we are in that age by the grace of God. We should

never feel forsaken. We should never be lonely. We need not succumb to feelings of depression. The promise He made that, "I will never leave you orphans," is ours to claim, to enjoy, to exult in.

Jesus identifies the Spirit as "the Spirit of truth." This is not intended to suggest that the other helper is a mere essence or quality of abstract truth or verity. He cannot be limited to a characteristic. We speak of "a spirit of compassion" or "a spirit of boldness." These are traits exhibited by certain individuals. But the Holy Spirit is reality personified for truth is correspondence with reality.

The world cannot receive the Spirit. The world is that vast domain which does not recognize the sovereignty of God. It is in rebellion. It stands under the judgment of God. It serves a prince who is doomed to be cast out (John 12:31). The world imposes a way of death under the guise of life. It is composed of those who live in the passions of the flesh, following the desires of the body and mind. It is constituted of sons of disobedience, the children of wrath (Ephesians 2:3). The world cannot see the Spirit. "In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ." The world cannot know the Spirit, that is, cannot experience the Spirit. Alienation from God shuts one off from the gifts of God.

Only the disciples of Jesus can experience the transcendent relationship with the Spirit, for to "know" in a Biblical sense means much more than to be intellectually aware. To know the Spirit is to enter into a warm and intimate kinship with Him, expressed by the words, "He dwells with you and shall be in you." The Spirit is not a passing visitor. He is not a transient guest. He does not ask for overnight lodging. The little girl whose grandmother had come to stay in her home was asked by a neighbor, "Is your grandmother visiting with your family?" Her reply was, "No, she didn't come to visit, she came to live

with us." The Spirit does not regard my body as a motel, but as a purchased possession.

The Holy Spirit has taken up residence in my heart. His new address is my body. You can say the same thing if you are in Christ. My inside apartment is no longer vacant as it once was. It has a new occupant who has moved in, swept down the cobwebs, cleaned out the trash and opened up the windows to let the sunshine in. The Spirit shall be with you— companionship. The Spirit shall be in you— possession.

Lives may literally be changed by contact with a new personality. This was apparent in the case of a couple of my acquaintance. They had but one son, a brilliant teen-ager who was killed in a frightful automobile accident in which his body was burned beyond recognition. The mother virtually lost her sanity. The father withdrew from all social contact. The two of them wreaked out an existence which became ever more wretched. Then two of their neighbors were killed in an accident which left a little Korean girl whom they had adopted, an orphan for the second time.

The couple who had lost a son grudgingly gave the ten-year-old girl a place to stay until the welfare authorities could locate another set of adoptive parents. The child, who had endured enough suffering to completely break one, was so bright and cheerful, and so hopefully inquisitive that she literally stripped the mask of selfish grief from the faces of those who had reluctantly accepted her. The woman began to smile again for the first time in several months. The man caught himself whistling a cheerful tune on his way to work.

The Creator who made us knows our need for fellowship with the divine. The statement, "It is not good for man to be alone," has a much wider application than our need for marriage and physical companionship. Man has a need for communion outside of and beyond the fleshly realm, and that

need can only be satisfied by the indwelling Spirit of God. It is this need which makes one a human. Left unsatisfied man is doomed to be less than human, a stalk cut off from its roots, a tumbleweed carried about by the wind.

No organization with which one is allied can ever fully supply the deep craving or thirst which gnaws at the inner being. Calling it a church will not alter the situation. In fact, working for the church without a sense of genuine partnership with Jesus can become a chilling, killing experience. Church secretaries become sick of the daily grind. Preachers become harried and worn trying to hold on to "a job." All of us have known men designated as good "church administrators" who have little warmth and affection. They are experts in business but Christ is not manifest in their lives. Men tend to forget that it is not what one is in, but who is in him that makes the difference.

It is easy to become so involved with "church work" that we have neither the time nor inclination to do God's will. The priest and Levite who passed by the Samaritan lying bruised and naked by the side of the highway to Jericho may have been on their way to a "men's luncheon" or a "congregational retreat." By the time one attends all of the meetings on "the church calendar" there will be little time remaining to serve God. One who measures faithfulness by how many sessions of Sunday school he has attended has been handed a different yardstick than the one which Jesus uses.

The Holy Spirit dwells in us to shake us to the foundations of our being. He did not move in to make us satisfied with things as they are but to enhance our dreams of things as they ought to be. The Holy Spirit creates pioneers and not settlers. No one, under His influence, thinks he has arrived, but rather, pauses for a moment before passing on. Death is merely the closing of the physical eyes that the spiritual eyes may be opened on the expanse of a "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

How does the "other Helper" really help? What does the Spirit actually do for me that I could not do for myself, if I ignored His presence and power? To answer such a question fully would require an analysis of every love letter to the saints written by one of the chosen instruments of the Spirit. I shall therefore limit myself to one area of the impact and influence of the Spirit so essential to my own spiritual well-being. It is appropriate to discuss it because the apostle distinctly says, "the Spirit helps."

The statement occurs in a chapter of comfort and assurance which looms up like a lordly peak towering above a mountain range of startling beauty. The entire letter written "to all God's beloved in Rome" is a monumental treatise on the magnificent theme of justification by faith in Christ Jesus, a concept of righteousness so unique as to challenge the most profound thinkers of all ages. As I read the letter it seems to me that every chapter becomes a campsite at a higher altitude until I stand at last on the summit represented by the eighth chapter.

This is a glorious revelation by the Spirit and about the Spirit. Every line is a rich treasure, every sentence a blessing of incomparable worth. It will bring cheer to the sorrowful, faith to the doubting, and comfort to the bereaved. It is bread for the hungry soul, a garment providing warmth to the freezing, a source of power for the weary and fatigued. And immediately following a blessed revelation regarding hope, in which we are to wait with patience, there comes a glowing announcement, "Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness" (verse 26).

The particular area of weakness introduced is that of prayer. The apostle writes, "For we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words. And he who searches the hearts of men knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God"

All of us have problems with prayer. Sometimes our prayers become stereotyped and stagnant. We get into a rut and slip into a routine and before we realize it we engage in vain repetition. Sometimes we postpone our prayers, making them matters of convenience, tailored to fit our schedule, so they will not interfere with other things to which we assign priority. There is ever a danger that we will pray to be heard of men rather than God. Those who do so have their reward as soon as their petitions register upon the ears of men. They need not expect anything from God.

We do not know how to pray as we ought because of our ignorance of what tomorrow holds. The apostle who wrote these words told the elders of the church at Ephesus, "I am going to Jerusalem, bound in the Spirit, not knowing what shall befall me there." Little did he realize that, while on a mission of mercy, he would be arrested and made a political pawn of political appointees for two years before being sent to Rome as a prisoner awaiting trial. How different our prayers would be if we could but see into the future.

We do not know how to pray as we ought because of our ignorance of what is best for us. Our very anxiety for something may be a symptom of doubt and littleness of faith. The pain from which we seek release may be needed to teach us the art of patient endurance. We may pray to live when death would be a welcome respite, or we may pray to die when we are on the brink of a great victory in life. "We do not know" sums up the predicament of the whole human family. "We do not know how" is an apt statement of universal shortcoming. "We do not know how to pray as we ought" is applicable to every child of God.

We are feeble but not forsaken, helpless but not hopeless. It is precisely because of our limitations the Holy Spirit was given to be with us and to dwell in us. The end of our strength marks the beginning of His power in our lives. The Spirit himself intercedes for us. The term intercede means to present

the plea or need of another as an attorney is an intercessor before a court of law. The Spirit is aware of our need since He lives within us, but He is also intimate with the Father who sent Him. I can be certain that my very best interests are in good hands.

Actually the Holy Spirit takes the deep yearnings of my inner being and transmits them to the Father. Language is a means of communication by which one person makes his thoughts known to another. It employs sounds arranged in combinations called words, and which create mental images in the mind of the other. But there are longings and desires for which there are no words in our vocabulary. There are feelings and emotions which I cannot articulate. I can but groan and sigh because of my inadequacy. But the Spirit is unlimited and infinite. He can translate my agonized concern into a plea too deep for words.

The Father searches the hearts of men. He is not unaware of the inner striving for understanding. He knows the burden which weighs down upon me. But He also knows what is the mind of the Spirit. The unselfish portrayal of my need, the unrestrained advocacy of my cause, the untiring intercession in my behalf, all of these are but a part of the "other Helper" who came from heaven to live in my tabernacle of clay and transmute it into a temple "fit for the Master's use."

The Spirit intercedes for the saints. If there was no other reason for becoming one of "the called out ones" this alone would be sufficient to motivate every thoughtful person to commit himself to Jesus as Lord of his life. The thought of a "hot line" to heaven manned around the clock by a sympathetic hand is a mind-boggling thought. In every crisis, in every moment of need, in every time of distress, a saint has access to the throne-room of glory. The saint is never alone.

I have a friend who lives in a rude cabin in a Canadian

wilderness area. He was a rather successful salesman in a large eastern city who came home one time to find a note from his wife informing him that she was leaving and would prefer that he never even try to contact her. Caught up in a state of inner turmoil he lost his selling touch and suffered from one blow after another. In this state he decided to leave what he called "the veneer of culture" and return to a primitive way of life. His nearest neighbor is now twenty miles away and can best be reached by a canoe on the river.

In the occasional letters I receive from him he tells me about the long cold winters in which he can look out of his windows and see the wolves trailing through the snow. But it was during the first of these winters the Spirit of God became real to him. Having become a Christian as a lad in Virginia he attended church, as we so quaintly and incorrectly phrase it, but it was not his life. It was merely a phase of existence reserved for the weekends and attended to as a necessary sacrifice of time and effort.

One evening while reading by the light of his kerosene lamp my friend became tired of the fiction book he held in his hand. He reached up and took the Bible from the shelf and began to read. It had been a long time since he had opened it, but now, for the first time in his life he became immersed in the words of revelation. All around was a pervading silence broken only by the crack of wood from the fire in the stove, or the sharp crack of a limb from the cold outside which covered his windows with a heavy coating of frostly rime. On and on he went through chapter after chapter. Suddenly he began to feel the sense of another presence. It was so persistent that he became fearful he was cracking up and suffering from an illusion.

He closed the Book and closed his eyes in meditation. He knew that his inward self was being purged. As he put it in a letter to me, he could feel the chunks of rottenness and putridity being dug out of his soul and a healing taking place. He forgave

his wife and experienced a deep love and understanding for her as a person, unaffected by sexual craving or passion. He felt delivered from the "dog-eat-dog" tactics of the marketplace which resulted in sharp rivalries bordering upon hostility in the selling game. Suddenly, he realized that the Holy Spirit was beginning to bear the fruit of love, joy and peace in a life which had been barren. At three o'clock in the morning he blew out the flame of the lamp and lay down under his Hudson's Bay blankets. He slept twelve hours and awakened a new man. From that day on he never forgot that the Holy Spirit was dwelling with his own spirit in what he calls "my mud house."

I do not think one has to abandon crowded thoroughfares to become aware of the intercessory companion. No two of us are alike. We differ in intellectual ability, physical strength, emotional depth, and general temperament. Some of us grow gradually to an appreciation of the Spirit. Others are confronted with His abiding presence in a time of crisis. But none of us will attain the joy that transcends every human thrill, or possess the peace that passes understanding until we become conscious of the Holy Guest within. It is tragic to see men try to explain away, or deny His presence, and thus impoverish their lives. One who prefers to light a candle to pressing the switch and flooding his house with light will always live in the shadows and stumble over the furniture.

The Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. We are ignorant. We do not know what to pray for as we ought. What God has in store for us during the next hour or the year to come we cannot tell. We are warned against the pride of boasting about making plans to move into a city and set up in business for a year to buy and sell and make a financial killing. We are reminded that we do not even know what will happen the next day. We are cautioned that we ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and we shall do this or that" (James 4:15).

We are to pray. The Holy Spirit is not a substitute for our prayers. He assists us in our weakness. He supports us in our ineptitude. We are to be always aware that we are made under the will of God and we should constantly say, "Thy will, not mine be done." But we do not know the specific will of God for our lives and we cannot frame our petitions in the light of what we do not know and cannot know in the flesh. The Holy Spirit is not subject to our restricted vision. He knows the will of God and intercedes for me in full awareness of the mind, intention and design of God. One who is led by the Spirit can never offer a prayer displeasing to God. And one may pray most powerfully in the divine estimation who is unable to utter a single word.

Let us never confuse the spirit of adventure with the adventure of the Spirit. The first may create daredevils, but the second enables us to dare the devil to do his worst. So long as my body is a citadel of the Spirit and the walls are manned by the other Helper I can defy hell and challenge Satan. Jesus said, "In the world you have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). It was John who wrote those amazing words, "Little children, you are of God, and have overcome them; for he who is in you is greater than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

Will you accept that? Will you trust in it? Will you commit yourself to it? If so, you are in the ranks of the overcomers! Some people are undertakers while others are overcomers. Undertakers are sometimes taken under by circumstances, but nothing can overcome an overcomer! The overcomer is victorious. He is a conqueror, not by his power, but by the power of God. His motto is "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." As someone put it, "Great people are just ordinary people with an extraordinary amount of determination." That is good but there are no ordinary people in whom the Holy Spirit dwells. When the extraordinary moves in the ordinary moves out. Do not sell yourself short! You are great!

Power to Prevail

Contents

In 1964, Eric Hoffer, the stevedore philosopher wrote "The Ordeal of Change." Included in it is the statement, "We are more ready to try the untried when what we do is inconsequential. Hence the remarkable fact that many inventions had their birth as toys." It is probably because of the deep roots of religious traditions that we have such a difficult time pulling them up to replace them with healthier growth. I am reluctant to censure too severely those who resist change. I know what a trying experience it was for me to come to a recognition of the vital role of the Holy Spirit in my life.

I grew up in a circumscribed religious party whose members regarded it as the sum total of the kingdom of heaven upon the earth. To be outside of it was to be outside of Christ. Its constituency was composed generally of honest, hardworking and neighborly people. They became bitter and rude only in their defence of their opinions and interpretations of the meaning of the sacred scriptures. They sought to demonstrate their loyalty to the Father by attacking His other children who differed with them.

The basis of such thinking and behavior, of course, is the philosophy of the grounds upon which we are related to God. The way we regard our brothers is determined by the way we regard the Father. If we are convinced that righteousness is by grace through faith we will act graciously. If we conclude it is by law we will spend our time laying down the law and arguing

about its implications. The seeds of strife and dissension lie dormant in every legalistic system, awaiting only the proper conditions to produce the frightful fruits of division. Tragedy is the inevitable result when any group substitutes love of law for the law of love.

I was delivered from the insecurity which is always created by legalism when I first became aware of the fact of the indwelling Spirit. Insecurity is the child of inadequacy. It is born of recognition that one can never be good enough to earn God's approval even while convinced that he must be. The only remedy for failure to measure up is to work harder while the intensification of effort makes the failure more apparent. The sublimity of truth is obscured by the sublimation of man.

The burden is lifted the moment that one realizes that "there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus." These walk not according to the flesh but the Spirit. Condemnation belongs to the fleshly walk, the carnal bias of existence. Those who walk after the Spirit start with that for which those who walk after the flesh always seek and can never attain. The hope of the saints is the hopelessness of the unreconciled.

"No condemnation" is not the reward of those who are perfect, properly informed, or living up to all of the law flawlessly. It is the natural state of those who are in Christ. If one is not in Christ he is under condemnation, if he is in Christ he is not. He has passed from death unto life. He is a new creation. One is not saved because he is perfect, nor condemned because he is imperfect. It is his relationship to Christ Jesus which places him in a state of salvation or leaves him in a state of condemnation.

In Christ Jesus the motivating principle is the Spirit of life. It is this rule of action which makes one free from the law of sin and death. One who is free is no longer a slave. He has no

obligation to a former master. He need not listen to him. He need not pay attention to him. He is no longer a debtor to him. It was the majesty of the revelation that the Spirit had broken the ties which bound me to sin and death, which started me on the real road to joy and happiness. I no longer had to prove I was justified. The fact of the indwelling Spirit was the proof. His presence was God's validating seal.

I would not want to leave the impression that I learned all about the Spirit's provision for me in a flood of light. The knowledge came slowly. It is not complete even now although years have passed. I am still growing in grace and knowledge of the truth. Life remains a voyage of discovery. The acceptance of the Spirit's blessings was made more difficult at first by my reluctance to recognize the Spirit as their source. I had always been taught that one received from God what he deserved. It was a real and tremendous switch to acknowledge that it was precisely because of acknowledgment that you were undeserving that God could enrich you.

The meaning of grace comes with difficulty to one who regards God's covenant as a legalistic document. To divest oneself of his carefully fabricated way of life sustained by works of righteousness and to trust absolutely in the unmerited goodness of another to receive him without merit is a heady thing. It is like divesting yourself of all your clothing and stepping out on the promise of another that he will provide you a garment to cover your nakedness. A former legalist is always afraid that grace will turn out to be a dream and he will find himself on a downtown street without a stitch on and no place to hide.

A lot of people sing about grace who neither understand nor mean what they sing. This does not particularly bother them for there seems to be an idea that if ignorance or equivocation is set to music it will not count. A congregation can lustily belt out all kinds of promises, but if they are set to four-four time, no one

expects to keep them. It now seems incongruous for an audience to stand and sing "Marvelous grace of our loving Lord, grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt," just before a preacher mounts the platform to "lay down the law" and make everyone feel a heavier burden of guilt. But we used to sing songs about grace and then make it appear that the real function of grace was to provide a written code which we must keep meticulously or be damned forever.

A legalist is one who postulates that righteousness comes by absolute conformity to a written code. Every legalist must be inconsistent in order to survive. He must engage in casuistry and self-deception to live with himself. If he once sat down and logically carried his thinking to a conclusion, his own heart would condemn him until he would be driven to insanity or suicide. It is for this reason he must engage in all kinds of little tricks and stratagems, and develop all kinds of little subterfuges. A legalist always wears a mask. No one ever sees him as he really is, not even those who seem to be most intimate with him. Legalism makes for life behind a closed door. Grace is life in the sunshine.

Perhaps I was dragged into the sunshine gradually and reluctantly. Nothing is more frightening than to be set free after you have spent your entire life in the gloom of a prison. This is especially true when one has decorated his cell to suit himself and make himself believe that it is not he who is in prison but those on the outside. He is safe while they are in constant danger. One does not need to worry about associating with "the wrong people" if he is locked in a cell. He is not torn inwardly by having to make decisions. He does not need to be anxious about the things which trouble the heathen, or say, "What shall I eat? what shall I drink? what shall I wear?"

The thing about grace and life in the Spirit which frightens a lot of folk is the fact that grace creates personal responsibility. We are not given a program of little acts to be performed as

"worship." Instead, we come to realize that everything we do in word or deed is done to the glory of God in the name of Jesus Christ. We do not have an institutional calendar of events which we must attend or be on a divine blacklist. There is no organizational determination of priorities. In fact, grace does not abandon one if he is shipwrecked upon a desert isle, and resume its relationship when he can "start attending services" again.

The most awesome thing about the whole divine grace-faith concept is its absolute individuality. This means that when my life goes askew I have no one else to blame. In a legalistic framework it is easy to find a scapegoat. I can confess my sins over the head of someone else and send him out of sight to bear my guilt. The preachers are just out after money, the elders are in a conspiracy for power, the congregation is made up of hypocrites, the sermons are "Mickey-mouse" types, the whole thing is organized, ritualized and paralyzed, until it cannot be energized. Everyone of these accusations might be true and not affect the grace of God one iota. I cannot say, "Grace has failed, therefore my obligation is ended." No one has ever found a means for experiencing grace while serving the devil with a clear conscience. Even in a moment of fleshly gratification he will hear the distant bay of the hound of heaven and know that he is on his trail.

Life in a legalistic camp is always one of weakness. There is no power to deliver one from frustration, disappointment, or futility. It is like being sentenced to a life of hard labor, under the surveillance of guards who make you produce or go into exile. Frequently the instructors are weaker than those whom they teach, and the weary prisoners are served up doses of the same religious and traditional fare, in a monotonous repetition which destroys the will to believe and the desire to reason.

One of the first things which caught my attention when I was extricated from the web of law and led to see the working of divine love in the provision of the Spirit was the association of

the word "power" with the indwelling Spirit. I should have expected this, knowing that the Spirit was the other Helper. A powerless helper would need help. A tow-truck with a battery so weak it would not start would accomplish nothing in helping stranded motorists.

The Greek language was rich in words for power. There was *dunamis,* **inherent power or ability. There was** *exousia,* **delegated power, the right or authority to exercise power. There was** *ischus,* **strength or power as an endowment. There was** *kratos,* **manifested or governing power. There was** *energeia,* **operative power. William Barclay aptly calls it "divine power in action." With such an array, it is not too much to say that God's revelation is "power-packed" and that we operate by Spirit-propulsion. We are propelled, not pushed.**

The two words which truly fascinate me in this list are *dynamis* **and** *kratos.* **The first has been transliterated to become our English words dynamo, dynamic and dynamite. The second appears in such combined forms as democracy, or autocracy. But it is the first which is generally used in conjunction with the Holy Spirit. A good example of it is found in its two appearances in Romans 15. In one of these the apostle credits "the power of the Holy Spirit" as one of the means by which Christ wrought through him to win obedience from the Gentiles. It is interesting that in this instance as related in verse 19 he distinguishes between "the power of signs and wonders" and "the power of the Holy Spirit."**

It seems plain from the sacred scriptures that the power of the Holy Spirit may be exercised without resorting to signs and wonders, and the mere appearance of signs and wonders does not indicate the exercise of the power of the Spirit (2 Thessalonians 2:9). It is doubtful that anyone is led to obey Christ by human ingenuity alone. It is Christ working through human instrumentality and by the power of the Holy Spirit who wins obedience from the Gentiles or any other group. Any

theory of effective evangelism which leaves out Jesus, men, or the Spirit, is lacking in a vital essential.

Not only are men won by the dynamic of the Spirit, but those who are won abound in hope by the same power. In verse 15 the apostle says, "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit, you may abound in hope." God is the author of hope. One who does not recognize the God of hope will never experience the hope of God. Joy and peace are directly related to hope. One who is hopeless will also be joyless and unsettled. God can fill us with all joy and peace in believing because He is the God of hope.

The Holy Spirit has the power to take joy, peace and faith, with which we are filled and energize them until we not only possess hope but actually abound in it. To have an abundance means to have an overflowing amount. One who is filled with hope above and beyond the normal or expected cannot be discouraged or depressed. Hope sweeps away all thought of inferiority and refuses to entertain even a thought of doom or gloom. It stands at the door of the heart and refuses admission to such negative thinking. The indwelling Spirit is God's dynamo. He enables us to do what we are called to do.

As I look back upon my life before I became conscious of the abiding Spirit it seems to me that my weakness manifested itself in three ways. First, there was a lack of real incentive. It was not that I did not believe that Jesus was who He claimed to be. I was wholly convinced that He was Lord. I had no doubt that He had been raised from the dead and was actually seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

I read the Bible and accepted it as a revelation from above. I defended its authenticity and integrity. I attended the assemblies of the saints with whom I was identified, and often went out of a sense of duty when I was so tired I could hardly sit

through the proceedings. I was so regular in my attendance that my brethren in the church called me "faithful," and those out of it thought of me as "a religious nut" and later as "a Jesus freak." Still there was something missing, an absent ingredient.

When I read about the life of the disciples as described in Acts, it seemed there was a quality about it which my own life did not exhibit. I wanted to recapture whatever it was which made them live so vibrantly and die so joyously. After I learned the glorious secret, everything I had ever read fell into place automatically. The friction was gone. The abrasiveness no longer "rubbed me raw" on the inside. And the secret was simply to quit trying so hard and turn the whole thing over to the Spirit. As the apostle wrote to the Galatians, whom he addressed as "cheerful idiots" according to J. B. Phillips, "If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit" (Galatians 5:25).

It makes a great deal of difference if you are "flying by the seat of your pants" as early operators of small planes described the experience of piloting small aircraft by one's own feeling and sensitivity, or with someone in the control tower. As soon as I became convinced from reading the "handbook for pilots of single engine aircraft" that there was a co-pilot who never had a wreck and couldn't ditch one because the name of the manufacturer was at stake I "wanted to take her up." I have been flying high ever since. And I am conscious of His presence. I want to live for Christ. I want to share with the saints. I want to go with God.

Probably the one passage which describes how I feel, and which always comes to mind when I am thinking in this vein is Colossians 1:11, 12, "May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light." All power! Glorious might! All endurance! There's nothing humdrum about that kind of life. And it is such a life for which you will be

motivated by the Spirit.

I think another manifestation of weakness was found in my lack of ability to chart a single overwhelming purpose in my life and adhere to it regardless of external factors. I knew what the Bible taught about stability and satisfaction in Jesus and I was not about to shift from my foundation on the Rock. But I had all kinds of dreams of what I could do and would like to do. In fact, I thought of so many things, I hardly did anything consistently and persistently. I could not translate any specific dream into reality.

One becomes frustrated when he sees life drifting by while he is standing still. He tries to imagine he is moving. It is a little like being on a train on a sidetrack when another passes you on the mainline. You have a fanciful notion that it is your train which is in motion until the other clears your vision and you realize you are immobile and rooted to the same spot. I often sat down and meditated about how meager my feeble accomplishments were and how few lives I had really touched.

When I came to a recognition of the dynamic of the Spirit who abides within I sensed almost immediately what I had been lacking. I had enlisted in a war for world conquest and was trying to prosecute it without any well-defined personal strategy. No war on earth has been successfully waged without a strategy. A great field general does not merely send up trial balloons. He does not commit his troops at random. Probing actions are in order only if they are part of a strategic approach leading toward victory.

My whole approach to life has changed. The Spirit enabled me to "put it all together." After long weeks of prayer for help and guidance I began to see what my part in God's "purpose which he set forth in Christ" should be. I took stock of my gifts and assets, and assessed my liabilities which had hindered and thwarted my progress. I dropped some tactics which I felt would

be detrimental in the long-run, and adopted others which seemed more adapted to the kind of battle in which I was engaged.

You can hardly imagine what a difference it makes to project a long-range plan, sufficiently flexible that it can be altered to meet changing conditions. One has to take into account the intrigues of the enemy, and also the attacks of those who should be fighting with him, but who are frequently moved by jealousy and envy to exert more hostility than those against whom there has to be an open declaration of war. It is exciting to be a commando for Christ.

No soldier is ever apathetic when pinned down by enemy fire. The best cure for indifference or unconcern is to crawl across No Man's Land at night with flares bursting above, lighting up the landscape. The reason why so many of us react as we do is because we were baptized into a rest and recreation camp and have never smelled the smoke of battle except in a skirmish with some of the brethren in a business meeting over the color of the aisle carpet in the new meetinghouse. I thank God that He has delivered me from childish quarrels over trivia and sent me into the frontline trenches with the "bombs bursting in air."

The third weakness which plagued me in the days when I thought the Holy Spirit was something which inspired the apostles and then went into hiding, was my lack of perseverance. It was a lot easier to start things than to see them through to the end. I suspect we labored under the misapprehension that if we could come up with the right gadget we could convert the world. We developed tract programs, visitation programs, special meeting programs and a lot of other programs. We were going to program the world into Christ. Any program seems successful at first because you hit it with all you have. It soon becomes apparent that it is not going to bear the fruit you expected to pluck, and if you possess a "program mentality" you must

quickly swing into another.

The fascinating thing about the spread of the Good News in the first century is that it was done without any of the things we consider so essential in our generation. The early saints had no printing-presses, duplicating devices, tracts or bulletins. They owned no church buildings, homes for the aged, or missionary headquarters. There were no ministerial offices, church secretaries or telephones. There were no automobiles, planes, trains or buses. Yet the message went out to the ends of the world and was heard by every creature under heaven.

It would appear while a lot of things we value so highly are helpful there is an internal dedication to the Cause which they can neither replace nor displace. One can never be unaware, as he reads the book of Acts, that the source of real power among those who first accepted Jesus as the Messiah consisted of their prayers and their being filled with the Holy Spirit. Their prayers were for boldness in the proclamation. Every child of God testified of his faith. They that were scattered abroad by intense persecution went everywhere preaching the Word.

A recognition of the empowering of the Spirit banished from my mind any thought of defeatism. The idea of "throwing in the towel" or of "climbing out of the ring" was gone forever. I could see that the concept of success, as the world looks at that delusive term is not in the word of God. We are not required to be a success but to be faithful. If we are faithful to the end we are successful. One of my real weaknesses had been human ambition for attainment, recognition, and acclaim. All of these are unworthy and no one will ever experience inward peace until the Spirit scoops all of them out of his heart and pours it full of the love of God.

When I quit trying to sell God on plans and devices which I had borrowed or drummed up, and got on his wavelength where I could commune with Him, and literally placed my eager

desires in His hand, things began to happen. One thing which impressed me greatly was the beautiful prayer of Paul for the saints at Ephesus as recorded in Ephesians 3:14-19.

Here I learned that it was possible for me to be strengthened with might through the Spirit of God in the inner man. This was a grant of God, and it was according to the riches of His glory. I had once applied for a grant to enable me to continue in school but I was rejected. There were certain restrictions and qualifications which barred me as a recipient. But God's grants are not made on the basis of our worth but because of the worthiness of His Son in whom we place our trust and to whom we submit our lives. It is because we have no merit which deserves His grace that it is made possible unto us.

The more I thought about those three pulsebeats of power the more I became convinced that God wanted me to be victorious. Strengthened with might! Through the Spirit! In the inner man!. What a trio of dynamic terms to be linked together in a person like myself. Sinful but forgiven. Fleshly but spiritual. Weak but powerful. Poor but wealthy. I threw myself in His arms and knew that here was safety, security and salvation.

Of course, it did not stop with that. I came to experience what it meant that Christ could dwell in my heart by faith. As if it were not enough that I could be strengthened with might in the deep recesses of my being, my blessed Lord would also abide in my heart. It was thus I was led to see that while faith is the belief of testimony it becomes vital when it leads one to embrace the object of that testimony. It is not enough to recognize and admit the veracity of those statements concerning our Lord. It is a fact that He was born in Bethlehem of Judea. It is a fact that He died on the cross. It is a fact that He was raised from the dead. These are facts to be defended and attested against all challengers. They are historical and can be substantiated as any other fact of history.

But the ultimate Fact to which all of these must lead is that I am His and He is mine. That Fact, which is demonstrable only by a transformed life is personal. Jesus is the Alpha and Omega. He is the beginning and the end. He is the first and the last. Just as one cannot spell a word with a letter before "a" and after "z" so there is no life before He enters and none after He departs, if we reject Him. Thus, all faith leads to the merging of my life into His until "It is not I who live but Christ who lives in me." I would as soon try to live without a heart as to try to live without Jesus in my heart.

I learned what it meant to be "rooted and grounded in love." Roots have to do with living things— with shrubs and trees. The word "grounded" has to do with building foundations. It makes a great deal of difference in the life of trees to have the proper soil into which the roots can penetrate. A large horticultural firm in the area in which I live set out hundreds of apple trees to create an orchard to which people might drive and pick their own fruit for a modest price. The place selected looked like a very poor location to the uninformed but a company survey revealed that it had the right soil mix to give substantial strength to growing trees. It was explained that the roots had something to grip.

It is amazing to many visitors from outside of New York City to see so many towering skyscrapers built so close to one another as they are on Manhattan Island. One man from the prairies of the Kansas wheat belt exclaimed, "I can't understand what keeps the place from getting top heavy and turning over on its side." The secret is that the island is almost solid rock. It is a proper foundation for huge structures.

The human personality is both a living organism and a growing structure. Without proper footing survival is impossible. In a world colored by sin trials of every kind are certain to come. Storms will beat against us. Disappointments will batter our hearts. The only foundation which can possibly

survive is love— the love that God is! And that love is not something we develop. It is poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Filled with that love one can only be victorious!

Adventure in Service

Contents

One of the greatest adventures in which human beings can engage is that of unselfish service to their fellowmen. When such service involves personal sacrifice and a willingness to forfeit life itself for the welfare of others it becomes a regal way to live and a heroic way to die. Jesus said, "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). Our word benefactor is from the Latin *bene,* good, and *facere,* to do. Beneficence is active goodness, and one who unselfishly engages in such a life is an honor to humankind and a vindication of the Creator who made us in His image.

If you were to take a poll of a hundred people no two of them would agree upon those whom they regard as having best ministered to the needs of man in the human predicament. If you were to limit each person to three names you would be surprised at the wide range of persons who would be mentioned. Noble service is rendered in a variety of ways and in a variety of times. The needs determine the response.

As for me, I do not feel I could be happy with myself if I were to ignore David Livingstone. This intrepid Scottish missionary and explorer was born in a crude tenement in Blantyre, Lanarkshire, Scotland, March 19, 1813. At ten years of age he was at work in a textile mill twelve hours per day, going directly from work at 8:00 p.m. to school where he studied until 10:00 p.m. Upon his return to his rude home he diligently pored over his books until his mother took them from his hands. By

dint of such application, he qualified for entrance to medical classes at Anderson College, Glasgow, and while there enrolled for a theological course as well.

He was deeply moved to help the less fortunate of the earth and embarked as a missionary for Africa, then called "The Dark Continent." He penetrated regions never before seen by a white man, discovering Lake Ngami, the Zambezi River, and Victoria Falls, one of the most notable cataracts in the world. He became greatly concerned about the depredations wrought by Arab and Portuguese slave-traders, and wrote with such power against the sad and cruel practice that he is credited with being a pioneer in the abolition of the nefarious trade. Livingstone never hesitated to take his place beside the downtrodden and persecuted, the ignorant and poverty-stricken.

While on his difficult journey to discover the source of the Nile, he was suddenly stricken in the village of Chief Chitambo, on the Congo River, and died under a tree on May 1, 1873. The grief-stricken natives removed his heart and buried it where he breathed his last, that it might always lie in the soil of Africa, whose people he loved. They then carried his body to Zanzibar on the eastern coast, where it was placed on the steamer Malwa and returned to England. On April 18, 1874 it was interred in Westminster Abbey, on a national day of mourning.

When friends examined the personal diary of Livingstone they found an entry made just before he died. In it he expressed the fervent hope that others would follow in his steps and take the liberating message of Jesus to the jungle natives. He died with the welfare of others on his mind. For years he had been talking about "those who are of my own order, the Godly poor." Once when he was asked to express his philosophy of life, he said it was the same as that of Jesus, who came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life for others.

The word "ministry" is a bright light in a star-studded

galaxy of spiritual verbal planets. Unfortunately, we have treated it like we have so many other rich terms. We have dimmed its brilliance in two ways. First, we have come to think of it as a specified function carried out by a trained specialist, hired to perform it. Secondly, we have ceased to regard or to talk about the work of every member of the body as ministry. The question "What is your ministry?" has given way to the question, "Who is your minister?" The subtle implication involved in this change is wholly without scriptural warrant.

There are several words in the original Greek which are translated "minister" by the men appointed by King James to produce the Authorized Version. The one with which we are especially concerned is *diakonos.* It literally means "one who executes the commands of another, especially of a master; a servant, attendant, minister." It can easily be seen why all in the kingdom of heaven are ministers. All of us serve a common master. All of us are equally subject to the commands of our Lord. To suggest that there is but one minister in a community is to suggest there is but one person serving God, and that he is doing so because it is his profession and he is paid to do it.

It is true that we may minister in different ways, but there is nothing in the word "ministry" which defines or delineates the type of service. A minister, in God's sight, is a servant, but what he does as service, must be determined from the command to perform a certain function. No one is a minister because he does a certain thing, but he does that thing because he is a minister. To apply the term *minister* as a title to a certain class of persons, or to designate those who fulfill a certain role or function is to misapply it. The result will be that all of those who do not fit into such an arbitrarily created category will cease to think of themselves as ministers of God. Their work will no longer commend itself as a partnership with God through exercise of gifts He has bestowed, but will become a secondary and supportive routine which will eventually come to be regarded as of little importance. It may even be regarded as "the thing to do"

to keep the church going, rather than as a service ordained by God through the bestowal of a divine gift.

Our loss of the very nature of *diakonia* as set forth by the Holy Spirit has caused many ills to come upon us. Just as *koinonia,* the sharing of life (eternal life) has made us a body, so *diakonia* has been provided as the divinely-authorized means by which that body can function in the world. To a great extent we have allowed our thinking to be warped until we have filled up the deep wells of *koinonia* and *diakonia* which the Spirit dug for our sustenance, and we are now forced to drink from shallow surface-water contaminated by the theological waste which has been drained into it. One of the great adventures of our age could be the digging anew of these wells.

Honest thinkers who are able to rise above their prejudices will admit that hat *koinonia* no longer has the profound meaning it had in the first century. The apostle John, in a singularly beautiful passage, defines it as the sharing of eternal life, held in common with the Father and Son, and with all others who have been adopted into that transcendent relationship. It alone can provide meaning and dignity to earthly existence which would otherwise terminate with maggots devouring putrefying tissue. To our utter shame and disgrace, *koinonia* has become association on a purely human level created by creeds and opinions, something to be manipulated by men on an organizational basis, and used as a threat to hold other men and women in a straight-jacket. When *koinoni* ceases to be the sharing of eternal life and comes to mean the sharing of mere deductions of the rational process it is time to write "Ichabod" above the portals of the temple. The glory has departed!

In the same way the majestic power of r of *diakonia* has been lost. It is this marvelous arrangement of God which was to provide dynamism and power, skill and mobility to the body. Neither the human body nor a body of believers will succumb to death easily. When a man loses the use of a limb by paralysis he

devises an expedient. He may secure a crutch or a walking device upon which he can lean. He is certainly not functioning as he was intended to do, but he is holding on to life while waiting for the end. He may secure a gold-plated crutch and boast about how much it cost, but it is still a crutch, and it is a testimony, not to his power, but to his powerlessness.

In many respects the body of Christ, the *corpus* composed of those who have been reconciled to God by the blood of Jesus, has allowed itself to become dysfunctional. As a result various means have been devised to enable the System to continue and to keep breath pumped into it. A clergy system has been developed by which an expert is imported from outside to come in and maintain a semblance of life by artificial respiration. If he fails to maintain a certain level as gauged by the number of those who gather for the weekly body count, or by the amount of money contributed, he is released and cast on the open market. Sometimes the group will pay for the time left on his contract, on the basis that it would be more costly to keep him than to get rid of him. Then the process of "trial sermons" by various job-seekers must again be endured by the employers and hopeful employees.

The greatest tragedy is not that we have created a new functionary wholly unknown to the primitive saints, and invested him with the work which is ours to accomplish, but rather with the radical restructure of the body. We have gradually changed from an organism, living, pulsating, throbbing, vital with its varieties of gifts, service and working, to an organization, operated like a business, with administrators, secretaries, directives, and posted rules governing employees and assignments. We have moved from a family relationship to a formal regimentation. We have substituted sectarian sacrifice for spontaneous, satisfying service.

How can we reform a state of affairs which dooms us to become an ever-decreasing minority with each passing day? We

must change our thinking, and the change must be radical and revolutionary. It must be more than sewing a patch on here or nailing a shingle on there. We are today exactly where our thinking has brought us. We will be tomorrow exactly where our thinking takes us. If we would be somewhere else tomorrow than where we are today we must change our thinking. This means we must not read the new covenant scriptures to justify what we have. They were not given to substantiate our presuppositions. We must read them as though they were just now given to mankind. We must search them as though no other generation had ever seen them. It is a question of what God said and not of what our fathers thought He meant by what He said.

One of the great truths we should recapture at once is that all of us are important to God. He has no favorites. There are no "teacher's pets" in the school of Christ. From whatever standpoint we are viewed we are all part of the grand design. We are branches of the vine, sheep of the pasture, members of the body, soldiers in the army, and stones in the temple. Some are weaker than others but weakness is not inferiority. Some are more mature than others but maturity is not pre-eminence in rank. God has placed each member in the body as it has pleased Him. God has adjusted the body so that it can function without friction. There is not one useless member of the body. All members have not the same function but all have some function.

Another great truth we must grasp is that all of us are ministers and priests. The kingdom of heaven is not a kingdom with priests. It is a kingdom of priests. The church is not a body with ministers but a body of ministers. Every child of God is a priest. Every Christian is a minister. Just as the physical body provides an opportunity for every member to fulfill its role so the spiritual body must provide for the exercise of every gift. The inauguration of any system which makes it difficult or impossible to exercise any gift does dishonor to the Lord of the gift. It reflects against the divine judgment which bestowed it. The purpose of the fellowship is to provide an arena in which

every gift can be utilized for the common good.

Whatever one does to the glory of God is ministry. The one who teaches a class in the study of the Bible is ministering. The one who sweeps the floor, dusts the seats, or mows the lawn, is ministering. The mother who rears her children in the faith by precept and example is ministering. Indeed, the apostle Paul writes, "Whatever you do in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him" (Colossians 3:17). Whatever the Christian does in word or deed is a manifestation of worship and in rendering worship he is a minister.

Diakonia **was used to designate the preparation of food for dinner by Martha who was emotionally upset by much** *serving* **(Luke 10:40). It was used to designate the aid given by angels to Jesus when they came and** *ministered* **unto Him (Matthew 4:11). It was used to designate the action of Peter's mother-in-law who arose from her sick bed and** *ministered* **unto Jesus and His companions. It was used to designate the work of a number of women who had followed Jesus from Galilee,** *ministering* **to him (Matthew 27:55). It was used to designate the help rendered to Paul by Timothy and Erastus (Acts 19:22). It was used to designate the collection of money for relief work by Paul among congregations of the Gentiles, and the transfer of that money to Jerusalem to relieve the needs of poverty-stricken saints there (Romans 15:25).**

All this points up the fact that the word *ministry* **is general. It does not contain within itself a specific function. The form which ministry takes must be regulated by other words and by explanatory terms. One does not become a minister by human appointment or ordination, but by the new birth. To deny that one is a minister is to deny that he is a servant of God. To deny being a priest is to deny that one is in the kingdom of heaven, in which every citizen is a priest by divine arrangement.**

One who surrenders himself unreservedly to the Holy Spirit will be imbued with a fervent desire for ministry. Indeed, one of the proofs that one is being led by the Spirit is the motivation and inner sense of compulsion to get on with the work of God. The Spirit dwells in us. He empowers us. He strengthens us with might in the inner man. He is the enabling force, the supplier of needs, the divine Agent. He is the other Comforter, the Helper, the Advocate.

The gifts of God are divine endowments of enabling power. The gift is not the purpose or function to which one is called. It is a bestowal of God to make possible the successful carrying out of the purpose or function. If the county presents the sheriff a new car it is to assist him in fulfilling the requirements of the office. Because the gifts of God are gifts of grace, and cannot be purchased or earned, they are *charismata.* **The word** *charism* **simply means a gift of grace as opposed to something given because of some consideration or exchange.**

The body of Christ has always operated through the gifts of its members. It has no other means by which to function. For that reason it is a mistake to think of some members as charismatic and others as not. Every child of God is possessed of the Holy Spirit and the Spirit furnishes the dynamic for his functioning in harmony with the will of God. By the same token it is an error to refer to a certain era as "the charismatic age." The whole period between the ascension of Jesus and His return is charismatic. The Spirit came when Jesus returned to heaven. He will remain through the age.

We should not imply that the Spirit is becoming active for He never became inactive. He has never hibernated. He is not beginning to move for He has never ceased to move. In Romans 12:3-8 occurs one of the most outstanding lists of *charismata* **to be found in the apostolic writings. Here we learn that prophecy, service, teaching, exhorting, contributing, rendering aid and doing acts of mercy are gifts of grace. These are compared in the**

immediate context with the functioning of members of a body, and it is distinctly said that the body of Christ functions through these *charismata.* Does this mean that if all who have these gifts exercise them the body of Christ will be able to fulfill its purpose upon earth? I think so.

The nobility of service as God regards it can never be over-estimated. We are all told that we must never flag in zeal, but be aglow with the Spirit and serve the Lord (Rom. 12:11). We are to contribute to the needs of the saints and practice hospitality (Romans 12:13). We are to owe no one anything except to love one another (Romans 13:8). We are not to pass judgment on one another and never put a stumblingblock or hinderance in a brother's way (Rom. 14:13). We are to bear with the failings of the weak and not please ourselves (Rom. 15:1). Perhaps the whole scope of the new covenant scriptures is caught up in one sentence, "Do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love be servants of one another" (Gal. 5:13).

Such service may require hardship, persecution and even death. It is this which places it in the realm of adventure by adding an element of sacrifice and risk to it. Prisca and Aquila risked their necks for Paul's life (Rom. 16:3, 4). Epaphroditus nearly died for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete the service of Philippi to Paul (Phil. 2:30). Paul went to Jerusalem to carry the contribution to the poor in spite of the fact that the Holy Spirit testified that affliction and imprisonment awaited him in every city (Acts 20:22). While there on his mission of mercy he was assaulted by a rabid mob bent on killing him. He was rescued in the nick of time by a Roman tribune and the cohort under his command (Acts 21:32). John projects ministry to others to the ultimate degree. "By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for one another" (1 John 3:16).

How can we revolutionize our modern church structures so they will again become the simple family of God where loyalty

to the denomination gives way to love for one another? At the best it will be a difficult task. It may be impossible. Forms and rituals sanctified by tradition become more important than the will of God. That will recedes from view as men continue to read the word through the tinted spectacles of their own presuppositions. Is there no hope? Indeed there is. We are not saved in groups but as individuals. We are not related to Christ through the church but vice versa.

No one can come between Jesus and me except as I allow him to do so. I am not joined to the head of the body because I am joined to other members, but I am joined to other members because I am joined to the head. I need neither the permission or sanction of others to minister to people in their needs. I am not a minister of men to Christ but a minister of Christ to men. As Jesus "went about doing good," so I can go about doing good. I have personally resolved never to leave the body of believers with which I am affiliated. I need them and they need me. Some of them are slow to learn, others are anxious to take the bit in their teeth and run. The first teach me patience, the second teach me restraint. But we are all brothers because we are all children of God.

My soul is bound up in the bundle of life with others. My greatest thrill comes not from making money, driving fast automobiles, or appearing on the stage. The real adventure lies in seeing lives take on new meaning because of touching them. In Lake Wales, Florida, is the famous Singing Tower, erected by Edward W. Bok, who edited the magazine *Ladies' Home Journal* **for thirty years. At the base of the tower is the inscription, "Make the world a better place to live, because you have lived."**

To see a smile come to a face twisted in pain, to have a child nestle close to you in simple trust, to watch hungry eyes light up at sight of the food you have provided, these are scenes that grip the heart, He who said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive," knew that our hearts bear the image of our Creator,

the essence of whose very being is love. Those who come to be ministered unto will always be unhappy and disappointed. Those who come to minister will always find fulness of joy. "It is enough that the servant become as his lord!"

During his earthly pilgrimage Jesus described the final judgment scene but once. Matthew, who was present for the occasion, recorded what He said.

"When the Son of man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them from one another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will place the sheep at his right hand, but the goats at the left. Then the King will say to those at his right hand. 'Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me. Then the righteous will answer him 'Lord, when did we see thee hungry and feed thee, or thirsty and give thee drink? And when did we see thee a stranger and welcome thee, or naked and clothe thee? And when did we see thee sick or in prison and visit thee?' And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.' Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' Then they also will answer, 'Lord when did we see thee hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to thee?' Then he will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me.' And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into

eternal life.”

COLONY OF HEAVEN

by W. Carl Ketcherside

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COLONY OF HEAVEN

Contents

But we are a colony of heaven, and from heaven we expect our deliverer to come, the Lord Jesus Christ.

— Philippians 3:20

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How This Book Came About

Contents

Different books are written for different reasons. In his "Personal Foreword" to *God Our Contemporary*, J.B. Phillips writes, "I believe that modern man can never possess a faith which can both command his intelligent loyalty and influence every part of his thinking and feeling until he discovers the unique authority of Jesus Christ." It was out of that significant personal conviction his book grew. The little volume of mine which you now hold in your hand is the realization of a dream. It was a dream which lasted for years. I should like to tell you about it.

I think I have always loved the Bible since I was old enough to read. Certainly I have always respected it. Perhaps there were times when I feared it. I began to become acquainted with it as a mere child. My father, who had been an agnostic, suddenly came to know Jesus in a very realistic way. It made a profound change in his life, and in ours. Although he had little formal schooling, he resolved that his children would not grow up ignorant of God's revelation. We had daily studies of the Word as a family. By the time I was twelve years old I had been completely through the Bible twice. That includes the genealogical charts with their list of "begets" as well. We did not skip any part of it.

At first I read it because I had to. It was one of the daily chores, like filling the woodbox behind the stove or feeding the chickens. Eventually I no longer looked upon it as a task to be

fulfilled, but as a blessing to be enjoyed. It was then it "came alive" to me. As I began to write books of exposition of its teaching, and to share my growing insights, there was a deepening realization that I would some day, if my life was spared, write a kind of running commentary on one of the apostolic letters.

I wanted to do this because I knew that each of these letters had grown out of a situation, or a combination of conditions, which called for advice, counsel and assistance. It seemed logical that if one were to be able to interpret them properly, he must first place them back in their historical settings. They needed to be looked at in their own frame of reference. I thought about all of them, but each time I reviewed them I kept coming back to Philippians. This little volume is the result.

I was motivated in the selection by several factors. It was a letter of thanks to a community of saints which Paul had planted. From the very first they had been deeply concerned about him. They had shared with him their material blessings more than once. However, they had lost track of him for a long time, but learning of his imprisonment in Rome, they gathered up those things which would relieve his needs. They sent their gift by the hands of one of their own members, Epaphroditus. He became seriously ill on the journey and almost died. The letter which he carried when he became well enough to return to Philippi was one of deep appreciation for the grace of God, and the thoughtfulness and generosity of the brethren.

This letter was written by a prison inmate. He was incarcerated because of his fidelity to the call of Christ. It is a letter of rejoicing. One is hard put to keep in mind that it was written by a prisoner. It puts hardship and persecution in proper perspective. It demonstrates how one can be free in spirit even while his body is chained. There are tremendous truths to be found in the four chapters into which we have divided this

apostolic letter. The deciding factor, however, was the link between the language of the letter and the geographical location of the congregation. Paul uses the word *politeuma* to describe their relationship to heaven. The word never appears anywhere else in Scripture. It is possible it would have served only to create wonderment, rather than enlightenment, elsewhere. But at Philippi it was especially appropriate, because Philippi was a Roman colony as Luke informs us in Acts 16:12.

Rome planted colonies at strategic points throughout the empire. These were not made up of conquered peoples, but of Romans. They were primarily to preserve the *Pax Romana*, the peace of Rome. This was the great dream of the Romans. Universal peace would be secured by recognition of one lord, the Emperor. Every year upon his birthday, every citizen in the world was expected to burn a pinch of incense in front of his bust and audibly declare, "Caesar is lord!"

A Roman colony was a "little Rome." It was set down in an alien world, where its citizens were strangers and foreigners to the land in which they lived. They spoke Latin, the language of Rome. Their dress, their customs, their whole manner of life was dictated to them by Rome, not by the social customs of the people of the land. The education of their children was to enable them to be proud citizens of Rome. They were taught to look forward with great anticipation and expectancy to the coming of the Emperor. That coming was resplendent in glory and pageantry. The colony must be ready at all times. There was to be no shame if the coming was unannounced.

To the alert mind of the apostle the little community of saints was a colony planted in an alien world. It was there to propagate the peace of heaven. This was to be a universal peace to *be* achieved by acknowledging one Lord— Jesus Christ. Every week the disciples gathered about a table and ate and drank in memory of Him. The colony of the Spirit which began with Lydia and her household was "a colony within a colony,"

and the last was the pagan culture in which the first was set down.

This explains Paul's use of *politeuma*. It was the word for citizenship. After having encouraged them to be followers together of him, and to observe those who did follow him as an example, he declares, "For we are a colony of heaven; from which we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ." What a thrill it must have been to the little persecuted minority in Philippi to realize they were actually a colony planted by heaven, set on a victorious course which would one day be world-shaking.

The careful reader will note that I have generally avoided the word "church." I have done so because it does not adequately translate the Greek *ekklesia*. It has become a theological term, and has taken on a kind of professional or institutional connotation. There is no indication in the Scriptures that God intended to form what we call the church. Certainly He did not design "churches," with their varied creeds, laws and concordats.

I have used the word "community," which seems to me to best render the word *ekklesia*. Congregation is a good term. It comes from the Latin *grex*, flock, and means "to flock together." But it also has suffered from the abuse of theologians, who tend to corrupt the words they use. *Ekklesia* literally means "called out," but it also implies a calling together, and in the case of God's call, it is a calling together into a fellowship, the sharing of eternal life. The community of God in any area embraces all who are a part of the family of God. It consists of all who have heard the call of God and have properly responded to it. There may be many "churches" in a city, but there is only one community of heaven. Churches embrace those who see things a certain way. The community of heaven is composed of all who have embraced Him as the Way. There is a difference in "the life of the church" and the community of the Life.

The word community suggests those who are bound together by a common tie. This common tie is not a creedal compilation, a written code, a particular opinion, or a special way of doing things. The tie that binds is faith in the person of Jesus. It was this which separated the community in Philippi from members of the Roman colony. As the Roman colony was planted about the standard of the Caesars, so the colony of heaven was planted around the cross of Jesus. The apostle wept when he told them that many were enemies of the cross of Christ.

The Roman colony consisted of mustered-out soldiers of the emperor. The colony of heaven consists of mustered-in soldiers of the King of kings. Rome had captured the material world. Blood had flown in streams, and universal peace, uneasy as it was, had been achieved and was being maintained by the sword. But the colony of heaven was engaged in a contest for the hearts of men. For this they were furnished the sword of the Spirit. The task of this colony has not altered. Its citizenry must have a strategy of world conquest, seeking to win men, not to itself but to the King of glory. We are engaged still in the great controversy of the ages. On one side is the philosophy that might makes right; on the other, that of right makes might. It is to be hoped that this little analysis of the letter written by an ambassador in chains may help us all to renew our efforts for the kingdom.

The Community in Philippi

Contents

The first streaks of light were beginning to break through the gray dawn at Philippi. Most of the houses were still darkened on this first day of the week, but in the upper room of one could be seen a glow of light. This was the gathering place of the Community, the body of saints who were followers of the Nazarene. More than an hour before, the clay lamps had been lighted and placed upon the lampstands and the members, hurrying through the darkened streets, converged upon the place, to greet each other with the kiss of love. Some carried hampers of food for the feast of love, but others— the poor and the slaves— came with empty hands. The long table in the center of the room was surrounded by members of the Community. At its head sat the bishops, as supervisors and shepherds, with the president for the day sitting in the center.

A solemn stillness prevailed until the president, arising, began the hymn of praise. The impressive cadence of the chant filled the room and stirred the hearts of the saints. The hymn was antiphonal, the president chanting the leading lines and the members of the body chanting the responses.

In the beginning was the Word.

And the Word was with God.

So the Word was divine.

He was in the beginning with God.

By Him everything had being.

And without Him nothing had being.

What had being in Him was Life.

And Life was the Light of men.

And the Light shines in the Darkness.

And the Darkness could not suppress it.

The president announced the reading of the sacred writings, and asked that some brother volunteer to read from the Torah, as given to the ancients through Moses. Following this reading, another arose to read a portion of the prophets. Once more, the president arose, to inform the members of the Community of a notable event.

He said, "You will remember that after our beloved brother Paul, accompanied by Lucas, Silvanus and Timotheus, came to Philippi and was so ill-treated here, he went from thence to Thessalonica, and bore the News to them with such results that a Community was planted in that city. You will recall, too, that the annals of our Community reveal that those who were then enrolled among us, were sent more than once to relieve the great need of our brother there. Later, whilst our brother was at Corinth, he wrote once and again to the saints in Thessalonica, some ten years ago. Certain of our number at Philippi, having learned of these epistles, journeyed to Thessalonica, and there read the words of our brother. It was our desire that copies be made so that the memoirs of our brother might be shared with the saints here and at other places. It is but recently that one of our brothers, having secured parchment, journeyed again to Thessalonica, and assisted by scribes in the Community there, made a copy, which now lies before me. It will remain here for our reading and admonition. One of my fellow-bishops will read

extracts from it in your hearing."

The aged saint arose, and read these words: "You yourselves know, brothers, that my visit to you was by no means ineffective. Though I had previously suffered and been ill-treated, as you are aware, in Philippi, I made bold in God with a great effort to give you God's News. My appeal to you was without imposture or impure motives, neither did I use guile. I spoke as one approved of God as worthy to be entrusted with the News, not as one who seeks to please men, but God who tries the heart. For I was never in speech a flatterer, as you know, nor one with covetous designs, God is my witness, nor one who seeks human commendation, neither from you nor anyone else, although entitled to be of consequence as an envoy of Christ. Rather was I very tender with you, as if I were a foster-mother nursing her own children. Thus yearning over you, I was delighted to impart to you not only God's News, but my very life, so dear had you become to me.

"Only call to mind, brothers, my toil and drudgery. Night and day I laboured so as not to be a burden to you in any way while proclaiming God's News. You are witnesses, and God also, how correctly, honourably and blamelessly, I acted towards you believers, just as you know how I exhorted, encouraged and charged every single one of you, as a father his own children, to behave worthy of God who has invited you to share his sovereignty and state."

With the close of the reading, the president again arose and spoke. "You are aware, brothers, how often during the past several years we have sought to have word from our brother Paul, and how our every attempt to locate him and to communicate with him has been fraught with disappointment. Now we have received word from Thessalonica as to his present state, and after the royal feast in memory of the death of the Christ, we shall have the report conveyed to us by our brother who bore the copy of the epistle from Thessalonica."

The president then spoke at length of the sacrifice of the Son of God, and of its meaning to the Community. He exhorted all to live in fidelity to the solemn pledge made to the Christ. Then, taking the loaf in his hands, he summoned the members to rise. Looking toward heaven, he solemnly gave thanks in these words:

"We give Thee thanks, our Father, for the life and knowledge which Thou didst make known to us through Jesus, Thy Child. To Thee be glory for ever. As this broken bread was scattered upon the mountains, but was brought together and became one, so let Thy Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into Thy kingdom, for Thine is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ for ever."

At the conclusion of the expression of thanksgiving, the entire Community voiced the Amen. The servants of the Community then distributed the bread to the members. Afterwards, all stood again and the president, taking the cup of blessing in his hand, again gave thanks in these words:

"We give thanks to Thee, our Father, for the Holy Vine of David, Thy child, which Thou didst make known to us through Jesus, Thy Child; to Thee be glory for ever."

Again the Community voiced the Amen. Then all drank of the fruit of the vine.

When the time came for the report concerning Paul, there was an intensity of feeling which manifested itself in the eager faces of the members. It was plain that these humble souls loved the one who first brought them the News. The brother arose and began to speak.

"Whilst I was in Thessalonica, brothers, I received confirmation of the rumors which have come to us. Our brother Paul, who left here several years ago, accompanied by the brothers whom we had selected to travel with him, arrived in

Jerusalem with the bounty which the Communities of the Gentiles gathered for the relief of the saints in Judea. He was told by the elders there of the feelings of certain ones among the believers, who had been falsely informed that he was instructing the Jewish brothers among us not to circumcise their children. To allay the fears of the brothers in Jerusalem, upon advice of the elders, Paul entered the temple with four brothers who had taken a vow, expecting to bear the charges of their purification, and thus demonstrate that he lived in obedience to the law.

"Unfortunately, near the close of the seven days of purification, the Jews from Asia aroused the crowd and assaulted him. They accused him of defiling their holy place by taking uncircumcised Greeks into it. This accusation was groundless. They had seen our brother on the streets with Trophimus, who had been selected by the Community at Ephesus, to bear their share of the bounty to the distressed saints. The mob assumed that Paul had taken Trophimus into the temple. In a maddened frenzy they sought to kill our brother, but he was finally rescued by the tribune of the cohort, Claudius Lysias, who was forced to send him forth to Caesarea under protection of armed guard.

"In Caesarea, seat of the Empire in Palestine, our brother was on trial before the procurator, Claudius Felix, who left him in prison for two years. You have learned by proclamation last year of the recall of Felix for violence and extortion, and you know that his life was spared only because of the intercession of his brother Pallas, the favorite of the Emperor. He was succeeded as procurator by Porcius Festus, and before him our brother, as a Roman citizen, made appeal unto Caesar. He was then committed to the care of a centurion for the long journey to Rome, and was accompanied by Lucas, the good physician, who resided among us and taught us the Way, and also by Aristarchus, whose home is at Thessalonica, and who is so well known among us in this region.

"It is as the result of a communication of this brother to the Community at Thessalonica I have learned that, after many perils, including a serious shipwreck, our brother Paul finally arrived at Rome. He was delivered by the centurion into the custody of Burrus, the Pretorian Prefect, and is now in the care of the household troops of the Emperor, although permitted to dwell in a rented house in the vicinity of Palatine Hill. He is under constant guard and in bonds. It is not certain when the deputation from Palestine will arrive to prosecute him before the Emperor. During this interval he is in dire straits, for the Empire makes no provision for the sustenance of such prisoners. This much I learned from the word conveyed in the message of Aristarchus."

At the close of this account, many of the saints were weeping. One spoke aloud the sentiment of his heart, "How can he endure so much suffering?" It was apparent that Paul was loved by all. The president arose and exhorted the brothers to pray for this one who had endured so much to bring the News to Philippi. One after another, the members voiced their petitions to God in behalf of His suffering servant. Some of the prayers were offered in voices which broke under the emotional strain. Occasionally, one halted his prayer to weep unrestrainedly. When the last prayer was offered, and silence reigned except as punctuated by a sob, the president once more spoke to the little group.

"It was our brother who taught us that the blessed Lord Jesus said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' You are aware how often we have been concerned about the welfare of this faithful laborer, and of how we would have sent to help him in his needs, but lacked the opportunity. The time is now here when we can confirm our love unto him. Let as many as are prepared give this day to the deacons, and those who cannot do so today, let them make known their intention to aid, and the deacons can then visit you and receive your gifts, that the bounty may be collected without delay. And let us not forget that other

things besides money will be required. There will be need of clothing, parchment, reeds, and other things. Let us respond nobly to these needs."

The president continued, "One from among us must offer to make this long and hazardous journey, and deliver unto our brother those things which he requires. Such a journey will be beset with danger now because of the ravages of the plague. You are familiar with the fact, brothers, that only recently the decree has gone forth to curtail all unnecessary travel, because of the fevers which have taken the lives of so many, and even desolated some towns and villages. Yet, we believe that He who notes the fall of a sparrow will not be unforgetful of such an act of love and deed of mercy. The Community will send up fervent prayers and will commend unto God the one who undertakes the mission."

This speech was hardly finished when Epaphroditus arose from his seat. He said, "You are aware, brothers, that I owe my soul to him who is now in bonds. I am ready to spend and be spent, in his behalf. How could I better serve our Lord than by attendance upon His faithful servant? We have labored together when he was among us. I long to see him again and look upon his face. I will convey your grace unto him and return to you any message that he desires to send. Perhaps I may even bring to you an epistle such as the ones he wrote to the Community at Thessalonica, and future generations reading it will know of our fervent love for him, and of his love toward us in the Lord Jesus."

The suggestion met with the approval of the entire company, for Epaphroditus was held in reputation for his work's sake. Accordingly, it was agreed that the servants of the Community gather up the bounty, and those who could do so would meet upon the evening of the fourth day for prayer, and on the morning of the fifth day Epaphroditus would set forth. Certain of the brethren agreed to travel with him along Via

Egnatia as far as Thessalonica from whence, after commending him unto the grace of God, they would return to Philippi.

It was early in the morning of the date of departure, that the little band of brethren turned their faces toward Rome, along the paved road which stretched from the Hellespont to the Milliarium Aureum, the "Golden Milestone," which stood below the palace of the Emperor upon the Palatine.

This was one of the outstanding roads of the Empire, marked with milestones along the way, and with stations at proper intervals where travelers could spend the night. It was traversed regularly by couriers, members of the military staff, and traders. Amphipolis was the first stop on this highway after leaving Philippi, and when the travelers reached it they had covered thirty-three miles, a part of which was over rough terrain, before they reached the plain where the Strymon River formed a large lake. Amphipolis, which means "between the waters," was named from the fact that the river encircled it.

After a night in this spot, the men pressed on the following day toward Apollonia, passing enroute the tomb of Euripides, the great poet and dramatist, who at the age of seventy-two produced his tragedy of Orestes at Athens. Another night of respite from the fatigue of the journey, and on the morning of the third day they began the remaining lap of the trip to Thessalonica, where Paul and Silas had planted a community of believers after they left Philippi years before. Here they found refreshment and rest for both body and spirit in the company of the saints, and here Epaphroditus took up the remainder of the long trek to Rome without the company of brethren.

One could wish that he had before him a diary of such a journey, but in its absence it can only be conjectured that the brave saint carried on across the full width of Macedonia until at last, after many days, he reached Dyrrhachium on the shores of the Adriatic Sea. At what juncture of the arduous trip he first

felt the severe symptoms of illness we do not know, but in spite of the danger attendant upon the sickness he carried on, risking his life to supply the things so essential to the life of Paul.

Embarking on the ferry which plied back and forth across the choppy and tempestuous channel between Italy and Macedonia, he landed at Brundusium and traveled north to the junction of Via Egnatia and Via Appia, and from thence, along the Appian Way past the Forum of Appius and Three Taverns to the very gates of the city of the Caesars. Here the traveler became a part of the jumbled traffic flowing in and out of the great metropolis sprawled upon the seven hills. The swaying chariots of the nobles and patricians, the prancing horses of the cavalry, were almost engulfed in the seething mass of pedestrians surging in both directions. Farmers bringing in produce, tradesmen with their wares in packs, soldiers transferring from one barracks or guard post to another, artisans, laborers, slaves, and foreign sightseers— these formed a teeming, pushing, shoving crowd, all intent on getting through to another destination, while adding to the confusion and turmoil about them.

Via Appia entered the city through the Porta Capena, the great arch which served to support the aqueduct above it, and Epaphroditus, passing through it, would find himself on a straight course leading toward the Circus Maximus, but the street veered to the right before arriving at this huge place of civic entertainment and skirted the Palatine Hill to lead down a gentle slope to the beautiful center of the imperial city, the Forum. Here would be found an imposing contrast with the dark, narrow streets, the sprawling hovels and the dirty shops of the remainder of the city, for successive rulers had vied with their predecessors in erecting magnificent structures.

The humble servant of the Community at Philippi, ravaged with fever and faint from illness, would be thankful unto God that his life had been thus extended, for he now stood within a

few blocks of his destination. Before him lay the Capitoline Hill, its entire surface covered with the imposing palace of the Caesars. Enquiring for the praetorium where the household troops were stationed for constant protection of the emperor, he would be directed to the rear of the palace and to the guard house. Here he would identify himself to the Roman sentry and secure the pass entitling him to visit the prisoner.

What a scene it must have been, when in the apartment of the faithful envoy to the Gentiles, the messenger from the Community of Philippi presented himself. How the humble prisoner of God, chained to his Roman guard, must have held up his shackled hands and reached yearningly toward this brother. And with what unrestrained joy Epaphroditus must have rushed into the arms of this beloved one, while the two of them wept copiously from sheer gladness and relief. We leave them together now, during the interval required to portray the background of that community of saints, which formed their bond of mutual interest. We shall return and visit them again when we have finished our other task.

The Colony of Rome

Contents

"And from hence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony" **(Acts 16:12).**

The city of Philippi was located in the beautiful and fertile plain which stretched between the mountain ranges of Pangaeus and Haemus. Originally it was called by a name which meant "Place of Fountains." This name bore testimony to the streams and rivulets which watered the territory. The city had been reconstructed, upon a nobler basis by Philip of Macedon, the father of Alexander the Great, and he called it by his own name. It served not only as a monument to his military genius, but in a more practical sense, as a fortress for protection of the Macedonian frontier.

However, Philippi occupies an even more important place in history, because this plain became "the death bed of the Roman Republic" as the result of a decisive battle fought here in 42 B.C. Inasmuch as this fact provides background for, and adds color to the narrative written by Luke, we will not be amiss to sketch an outline of events leading up to it for the interested reader. Such a presentation must begin with Julius Caesar, sometimes called "greatest of the Romans."

Born of a patrician family, Caesar was by training a politician rather than a soldier. Pompey was the idol of the populace and the great military hero of the day. But, when Caesar was sent as proconsul to Gaul, his ability to plan and

execute military strategy was demonstrated, and he proved himself to be one of the greatest generals of all time. He was virtually worshiped by his men, and his success bordered upon the phenomenal. In nine decisive campaigns he subdued all Gaul, and in 55 and 54 B.C., he invaded Britain.

The jealousy of Pompey was aroused by the acclaim given Caesar, and his envy drove him into closer alliance with the aristocratic party, which controlled the Senate. He succeeded in getting through an order to disband the army of Caesar, but when the order was conveyed to Caesar he refused to comply. Leading his men to the banks of the Rubicon, the little river which marked the boundary of Italy, Caesar halted to meditate and ponder the consequences of an attack upon his country. With the words, "The die is cast," he plunged into the stream and led his soldiers across: He was welcomed by the people, and Pompey, with the senators and nobles, fled to Greece.

Within three months all Italy was at the feet of Caesar, and on August 9, 48 B.C., he routed the forces of Pompey on the plains of Pharsalia. By further speedy conquest he subjugated the rest of the world, and when he defeated the last force of opposition led by the two sons of Pompey in Spain, 45 B.C., he was made *imperator* for life, and his portrait was stamped on the coins of the realm.

Although Caesar publicly refused a crown offered to him at a festival by Mark Antony, the aristocrats were suspicious of his designs, and feared he would even yet declare himself to be a king. They were urged into a conspiracy against his life by Cassius, who was motivated by a lifetime hatred for tyrants, as well as by personal animosity because Caesar had seized for himself a number of lions, which Cassius had accumulated and kept caged at Megara. He found an assistant in Marcus Brutus, a descendant of Junius Brutus, who had originally driven out the Tarquins and destroyed the monarchy.

Brutus pretended openly a friendship for Caesar, and had received openly many favors from him. But he also received many letters from anonymous sources urging him to rise up as did his illustrious ancestor and overthrow the *imperator*. Some of these messages merely contained the words, "Oh, that we had a Brutus now!" or "You are not a true Brutus!" Conditions were made worse by flatterers of Caesar, who slipped about by night and placed kingly diadems upon his statues, and who by day harangued the mob in an attempt to get them to salute him as king instead of dictator.

It was finally agreed to kill Caesar at a meeting of the Senate, called for the middle of March, on the day which the Romans called the Ides of March. The convention was held on a portico, adjacent to the theater. This portico contained a large statue of Pompey, whom Caesar had defeated in his rise to power. The conspirators arrived well in advance of their victim, and when he came followed closely about him into the inner precincts while one of their number, Trebonius, detained Mark Antony in conversation outside the door. Tillius Cimber pressed forward under pretence of making an intercession in behalf of his brother, who had been banished, but grasped the robe of Caesar and pulled it from his shoulders. Casca inflicted the first wound, a superficial one, and Caesar turned and grasped his dagger by the hilt, crying out, "Villain Casca, what do you?"

By this time, feeling the impact of many daggers, and still wrestling with Casca, Caesar looked hurriedly and wildly about him, seeking an avenue of escape. It was then he saw Brutus also with upraised dagger, and, as if in despair that he would be thus treated by one whom he had befriended, he relinquished the dagger of Casca, and drawing his robe over his head, submitted his body to their blows. As the daggers were driven into his body, the assassins became smeared with blood, some of it from a cut which Brutus had received on his hand. The blood of the slain Caesar ran red about the statue of Pompey.

In the first reaction to the killing it appeared that the conspirators had won the day. Signal honors were heaped upon them. In an allotment of provinces, Brutus was given Crete, and Cassius was assigned Africa. But a violent reversal occurred at the public funeral held for Caesar. In the reading of his will, it was learned that he had bequeathed seventy-five drachmas to each man in Rome, and given his beautiful formal gardens beyond the Tiber as a park to be used by the public. During the oration delivered by Mark Antony, the speaker, as a climax to his pathos, held aloft the toga of the murdered man, exhibiting the many rents made by the daggers and the number of wounds inflicted. The people virtually went berserk. Pillaging the shops and stores of their furniture, they made a huge pile of benches, tables and chairs, and cremated the body of Caesar in the forum, and snatching burning brands from the pile, they ran to burn the property of the murderers. Brutus and his party were forced to flee for their lives.

Julius Caesar made the son of his niece, whom he had adopted, his heir to the public office. The young Caesar was at Apollonia in school when he learned of the death of his benefactor. He immediately went to Rome and gained the favor of the people by distributing to them the money mentioned in the will. Adopting the title Augustus, he welded the army into a cohesive unit, and with the help of Mark Antony, to whom he became reconciled after a quarrel, he made ready to defy the forces which were gathered abroad under the banner of Brutus and Cassius. The two armies finally met upon the plains of Philippi.

In the first day of battle the troops under command of Brutus executed great slaughter, but in the fierceness of the fighting were severed from the segment commanded by Cassius. This contingent was driven back and Cassius was forced to flee to a hill overlooking the plain. Here he retired to a tent, taking with him one of the freedmen, whom he commanded to kill him. The deed was done, the sword striking the head of the general

from his body. It is an ironical twist of fate that Cassius died because he was nearsighted, and mistook approaching friends for his enemies. When Brutus was informed of the death of Cassius, he mourned over him, calling him "the last of the Romans." However, by the promise of magnificent gifts, Brutus rallied those who had followed Cassius, but when the battle was joined again, the forces of Augustus and Antony were victorious.

Brutus, with a few friends who survived, came at night to a hollow under a great projecting rock, where he sat down to meditate upon his ill fortune. When evidence was presented that his case was hopeless, he made a brief address to his companions and shook hands with each one. Then, taking about three of his friends, he walked a little way off from the main group. Here he took hold of his sword, and directing it with both hands upon the hilt, plunged forward upon it and killed himself. The dead body was found by Mark Antony, who directed that his richest purple mantle be thrown over it. With the death of Brutus, the last hope of the revival of the republic also expired.

Augustus, beholding the strategic importance of Philippi, resolved to make it the site of a colony and utilize it as a fortress city for protection of his frontier. Accordingly, he made special provision for his soldiers who had fought so valiantly to be retired on pensions, and to reside at this place of their signal honor. It was an excellent location because of its nearness to thermal springs and due to its temperate climate. A proclamation was made of its colonial status and it was given the name *Colonia Augusta Julia Philippensis***. It was a living memorial of the victory over Brutus, and its citizens were filled with the pride of military conquest.**

Since it is important to this narrative to understand what all was involved in a Roman *colonia***, we ask the kind indulgence of the reader for the detailed account given herewith. The modern student, having in mind the colonial systems of more recent nations, may miss much of the significance of the term as**

used in the first century of this era. It is only as we understand the expression in its fullness that we can appreciate some of the language of the apostle Paul as he wrote to the community of the saints who here resided.

A Roman colony was "a little Rome," regardless of where it was located. It was merely a reproduction, to the extent possible, of the great capital of all the universe. By looking at the colony, one could visualize the nature and character of the original. The residents of the colony never forgot that they were Roman citizens. They looked upon themselves as a community of strangers in a strange land, in so far as the inhabitants of the territory were concerned. They cherished the thought that their names were inscribed in the archives of their mother city, and their citizenship was thus assured by this enrollment. They spoke the language of Rome, and behaved with the dignity and decorum commensurate with the position of those who represented such a worthy position among men.

The colony did not make its own laws. The citizens were subject to the laws revealed or approved by the emperor, and although many had not seen him personally, they rendered complete obedience to his edicts and demands. It is not too much to say that they worshiped him as their god and deliverer. The local officers were designated by the terms applied in Rome, and were subject to the discipline of the *imperator***. When new laws were issued they were publicly posted, read and explained to the citizenry summoned together for the purpose. Sometimes the Laws of the Twelve Tables were inscribed upon brazen plates in the Agora, or marketplace, as was the case in the city where Cyprian lived, according to his own testimony.**

Such a colony was Philippi. It did not represent a city of foreigners who had been adopted under the standard of Rome after being subjugated. A city of that nature was called a *municipium***, not a** *colonia***. Essentially a military colony, Philippi was composed principally of Roman citizens transplanted here**

to protect and defend the interests of the mother city upon the Tiber. They were tied to Rome by invisible cords and cherished the rights bestowed by this citizenship above all other earthly prerogatives.

The Colony of Heaven

Contents

Two years had elapsed since the return of Paul to Antioch, upon completion of his first preaching tour, and there was a longing in his heart to visit again the communities he had planted, to see how they fared. The interval had not been spent in idleness. Certain ones had come down to Antioch from Jerusalem and disturbed the minds of the brethren by teaching that no one could be saved unless he submitted to circumcision in the flesh. Recognizing this as an infringement upon liberty in Christ, and as a denial of salvation by grace, Paul and Barnabas vigorously resisted the doctrine. The dispute terminated in a decision to go to Jerusalem and consult the apostles and elders about the matter.

At Jerusalem, the discussion was intense with feeling, but was resolved in favor of the Gentiles being received into the communities, without circumcision. A letter was drafted to all and sundry to inform them of the decision, and a copy was presented to Paul and Barnabas. In addition to this, two of the trusted servants of the Community at Jerusalem, Judas and Silas, were sent to Antioch, to personally confirm the authenticity of the document. After a brief stay Judas returned to Jerusalem, but Silas remained in Antioch, devoting his time with Paul, Barnabas, and many others to instructing and proclaiming the Word.

Paul was anxious to deliver the decision of the brethren in Jerusalem to the communities he had originally planted, and

suggested to Barnabas a tour of the area where they were located. Barnabas was unwilling to go unless accompanied by his young relative, John Mark, who had started with them on the first tour, but soon deserted them to return to Jerusalem. Paul opposed taking him along, perhaps feeling that his presence would to some extent nullify the effect of the letter. Mark, who had been reared under the Judaistic influence in the Jerusalem community, deserted the first tour when it became apparent that Paul would extend the benefits of the Good News to the uncircumcised. It was after his return to Jerusalem, where he no doubt reported the activities of Paul and Barnabas, that the Judaistic teachers came to Antioch and created the disturbance. Believing that he was not fitted for work in Gentile areas because of his former training and experience, and unwilling to allow any influence to hinder the spread of the News, Paul was adamant in his refusal to allow John Mark to start the second tour.

The contention between Paul and Barnabas grew more heated. Neither was willing to concede to the judgment of the other, so they separated. Barnabas sailed to Cyprus, where he had been a former land owner, and Mark accompanied him. Paul selected Silas as his traveling companion, and they set forth into the region where Paul had been reared, going through Syria into Cilicia. When they had strengthened and confirmed the brethren in this area, they turned their faces toward the scene of the first tour, a territory separated from their present locale by the towering peaks of the Taurus range.

Fortunately, the trampling feet of marching men had worn down an excellent pathway through the gorge known as the "Cilician Gates," and through this narrow pass the soldiers of the Prince of Peace could now cross over from the plains of Cilicia to the plateau upon which Derbe was located. This was the farthest extremity reached on the first tour, and one can contemplate with joy the quickening of the pulse and the eager anticipation with which Paul approached the city. The news of

his arrival would spread swiftly, and the place where he lodged would soon be crowded. Silas would be introduced and welcomed, and inquiries as to the welfare of Barnabas would be answered. In a more formal fashion, when all were gathered, the letter from Jerusalem would be read and its provisions discussed. When the time came to part, there would be many prayers, accompanied by tears. The few days of fellowship together would constitute a mountain-top experience for the disciples of the Messiah. This would be tempered with the thought that they might not meet again on earth.

With their faces set toward Lystra, we are certain that Paul would brief Silas on conditions in that city, and give an account of his previous experience there. Silas would learn that outside the gate was the great statue of Jupiter, recognized as the lord and protector of the city. Here the pagan priest ministered at the altar, slaying oxen which had previously been decorated with garlands of flowers. Paul would need to recount the healing of the lame man who had been a cripple from birth, and tell of the effect of this deed upon the superstitious citizens of Lystra.

Silas would learn of the wave of excitement which caused the shout to go up that "The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men." He would be informed that the populace designated Barnabas as Jupiter, while calling Paul Mercurius, or Hermes, the god of civic joy, because they concluded that he must be the messenger of the gods, inasmuch as he appeared to be the chief speaker. And we are sure that Paul would tell his companion how they ran in among the shouting multitude, pleading with them to desist and to cease their superstitious adulation, and to recognize them as mere men even though they did carry a message from heaven. We can only surmise the questions Silas would ask as they drew near the city, and the interest with which he would listen to the reply. Perhaps Paul showed him the place to which he was dragged by the mob, and described the brutal stoning which brought him so near to the brink of death.

The rejoicing among the saints at Lystra must have known no bounds when Paul again appeared in the city. And the apostle and his present companion would be greatly encouraged by the fidelity of those who had entered into covenant relationship with the Messiah. All were eager to report the spiritual growth and activity of an outstanding young man, Timotheus, and Paul expressed a desire to have the youth travel with him into the regions beyond. The father of Timotheus was a Greek, but his mother was a Jewess, and also a member of the community of saints. The mother and grandmother had made a special effort to teach Timotheus, with the result that he was well informed in the law and the prophets. Due to the influence of his father, the young man had not been circumcised, and realizing that this fact would hinder his influence in Jewish circles, the apostle circumcised him. The acquirement of this ardent worker was one of the most valuable acquisitions to the cause represented by the evangelists, and time served to demonstrate the wisdom of his selection as a traveling companion.

Driven by an inner urge, and impelled by an anxiety to acquaint all of the saints with the decisions which had been reached at Jerusalem, the three men pressed on from city to city. The communities were strengthened and confirmed, and each day there were added numbers of persons who were led to an acceptance of the Messiah when they became convinced that these men were not advocating a mere sect of Judaism. In a flush of triumph the proclaimers of the Good News were directed by the Spirit to pass by the province of Asia, and so they came to Phrygia and Galatia.

The journey was arrested at this point by the illness of Paul, and the rude but warmhearted Gauls were treated to the Message, because his bodily ailment would not allow Paul to proceed further. Unwilling to waste precious time, the envoy of the Christ made his period of detention one of service for Him whose slave he had become, and although his condition was a trial to his hearers, they did not ridicule or despise him, but

received him as an angel, or a messenger from God. He publicly portrayed the Christ in such a manner that his hearers could almost visualize the crucifixion. The result was that Jews and Greeks, slaves and free men, all became one in Christ.

Leaving the weak and beggarly elemental spirits, both men and women who had been in bondage to idolatry cast off the yoke of such slavery and yielded themselves to the true God. Throughout Galatia, communities of believers were planted, and those who received the Spirit by the obedience of faith felt a deep satisfaction as the result of the ministration of this one whose bodily ailment had turned out so providentially to their welfare. It was with reluctance, when able to travel again, that the ambassador of the Messiah bade farewell to those whose love for him had been so fervent, they would have plucked their eyes out and given them to him. But the call of regions beyond was too great to tarry longer, and they turned their faces in the direction of Bithynia.

Again the Holy Spirit blocked the way and refused to allow them to go to their objective. Skirting the borders of Mysia, they directed their steps toward Troas. Hundreds of years before, the blind poet Homer, perhaps a contemporary of the Biblical prophet Elijah, had made the plain of Troy famous. In the twenty-four chapters of the Iliad, that great epic poem of the Trojan War, gods and men had conspired, struggled and fought. To the city made famous by the names of Agamemnon, Achilles, Hector and Paris, came the soldiers of the invisible King, clad only in the armor of righteousness and carrying but one weapon, the sword of the Spirit. But here, where Alexander the Great had stood by the tomb of Achilles, noted for the "ruinous wrath, which laid unnumbered woes on the Grecians," and dedicated himself to world conquest; a divine summons came to the Jew of Tarsus to extend the conquest of the Prince of Peace over the territory of Europe.

During the night, when the city was silent and sleeping, the

envoy of the Christ had his slumber disturbed by a vision. A figure appeared at his bed, and he identified the supernatural visitor as a man from Macedonia. The man stretched forth his hands in an imploring gesture as if begging for aid, and said in pleading terms, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." The last word indicated that he was a spokesman for many, and that a great host of the inhabitants of Greece needed the assistance which only the Christ can bestow.

Paul never doubted the importance of the vision. Concluding that God had opened the door to Europe, he divulged the secret of his nocturnal visitor to Silas, Timotheus, and Luke, who had joined the little band since the sickness of Paul. Dawn found them at the docks of the harbor seeking passage across the Aegean, and providence had the ship ready as well as the men. And the same providence, permitting no delay, allowed the wind to blow from the south so that the hoisted sails billowed out and the ship plowed through the strait and past the Dardanelles, and by evening had reached the island of Samothrace, where the mariners anchored for the night in one of the safe havens.

The journey was resumed the next morning, and again the vessel was sped on her way by favorable winds, so that before the day ended the travelers arrived at Neapolis, where the Roman military road came down to the Aegean Sea. Upon this road they then set forth for Philippi, ten miles distant, climbing the slope leading upward to the high ridge separating the sea from the fertile plain which lay beyond. From its summit they could look back over a beautiful expanse of island-studded sea, and forward to the great sweep of land where the battling forces of Rome had sealed the fate of the Republic but a few years before.

Philippi was an excellent proving ground for the power of the Good News. As a colonia, it was a "little Rome" with ties stretching back to the city on the Tiber. Its citizens were

primarily military men and their families, related to the soldiers of Augustus who had fought so brilliantly on the outlying plain. Arrogant, proud of their service record in the army of a world power, such persons would have little time for the story of a Jew in a remote province, who died on a cross at the sentence of a territorial governor. This colony would provide an opportunity for one who desired to visit Rome to see the effectiveness of his labors among those who were so haughty, they divided the world of mankind into "Romans" and "foreigners."

The emperor, hundreds of miles distant in the capital city, ruled the colony, consisting of many who had never seen his face. They were bound to him by the invisible ties of Roman citizenship, and by their oaths of allegiance. Because of their relationship to him, they were welded together into a compact community made up of those who shared in mutual aims and privileges. The emperor was more than a distant ruler exercising control over their lives through his agents. He was also regarded with superstitious reverence, and worshiped as a god.

Into this city steeped in martial traditions, came the emissaries of another distant King. Their task was well defined. It was to plant a colony of heaven in the colony of Rome. They were to enlist soldiers under the banner of the Nazarene, and bind them by sacred vows of allegiance to one whose features they had never beheld. They were to band them together as a colony of heaven, so that those who looked upon them could see reflected the purposes of the King of kings.

Now the kingdom of the Messiah was brought face to face with that of the Caesars. The rule of the heavens was to confront the last great world empire. It was at Philippi that the test was to be made. It is true that the proclamation of the heavenly message prior to this had always been made upon territory dominated by Rome, but it had been made to Jews and Greeks who were regarded as "foreigners" by those who ruled them. At last it would be presented to those who would say, "These men

are Jews and they are disturbing our city. They advocate customs which it is not lawful for us Romans to accept or practice."

These thoughts must have flooded the mind of Paul as he entered the city. It would appear that everything was against the success of his effort. The history of the place, the disposition of the populace, the nature of their government, the pride of ancestry, the worship of the emperor, all of these constituted barriers which it would be impossible to batter down if dependent solely upon man. Add to this the fact that the two principal proclaimers were Jews and would face the prejudice of the Roman citizens, and one can see the difficulty of securing a foothold for the Good News. Yet all of these factors would melt away in contemplation of the vision of the Macedonian call for help. If God called upon them to proclaim the Good News to the people of Europe, He would open the way.

There was one feature which loomed important. Paul was a Roman citizen. This great benefit had not been purchased with money, but, as a descendant of one of the "first families" of Tarsus in Cilicia, he was born to the privileges which once had belonged only to the dwellers on the Italian peninsula. As a citizen, he could travel throughout the world with the full protection of the Roman garrisons. It was illegal to bind a Roman with fetters, or to beat him with rods. Petty officials who disregarded these civil rights would be stricken with terror when informed of their infringement.

While this fact operated in favor of the proclaimer, there was one thing which increased the difficulties of labor. In Philippi there was no synagogue of the Jews. The synagogue in a Greek city afforded a place for the initial declaration of the Good News. Here could be found an audience composed of interested students of the Torah and Hafterah, the revelation of God through Moses and the prophets. Upon this foundation one could readily build and lead the minds of the devout to an

acceptance of the Messiah as a fulfillment of the Torah. Synagogues were scattered throughout the world, and the fact that there was none in Philippi is indicative of the status of that city.

It required ten men, willing to devote much time to prayer and study, to establish and constitute a synagogue. In those communities where such a group could not be found, a Proseucha, or place of prayer, was designated. In many instances a building was employed as a proseucha, occasionally a place in the open air, often upon the bank of some stream, would be selected and set aside as a spot to which the faithful might repair for their devotions, particularly upon the sabbath days. Here there was less formality than in the synagogue, and the prayers and meditations, not being guided by a president, were carried on individually.

In conformity with Jewish practice, on the sabbath day the messengers of the Good News went out through the city gate to the Gaggitas River, and entered the proseucha. They found the congregation composed of a few women. Not all of these were of Jewish extraction, and not all were local residents. At least one was a proselyte to Judaism. Her home was at Thyatira, a city in Asia Minor, which was a center for the dye industry, and where the various guilds were organized as trade unions to protect their competitive position. Of these guilds, none was more famous than that of the purple dyers, who used an extract from the little shellfish, the murex, to produce a dye prized by the nobility. Lydia, who was at the proseucha, was a business woman representing this guild.

The envoys of the Messiah did not consider it beneath their dignity to speak to the little group of women who had come together. They told the simple story of the Nazarene, and linked it with the prophecies of old. And although it was a man who summoned them to Macedonia in the vision, it was a woman whose heart was first opened to give heed to what was said by

Paul. Lydia was motivated to acknowledge her conviction that Jesus was the Messiah, and in this declaration of faith she was joined by the associates of her household. These were then led into the water of the nearby river and were immersed in the stream, and into the divine relationship with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

The firstfruits of the conquest of Europe, on European soil, were gathered into the granary. It is true that Lydia was from Asia, yet she heard the message on the fringe of the Roman colony, and her house became the base from which operations were directed to extend the borders of the colony of heaven. In becoming modesty, as soon as she was immersed, she offered the facilities at her command to those who served the Messiah. She invited them to her house to stay, if they deemed her to be faithful unto the Lord, and prevailed upon them to make it their headquarters. We doubt not that here assembled those others who surrendered unto the claims of the Messiah from day to day, and here the community of saints sat down around the memorial feast. Peace and serenity prevailed, and the work moved forward in calm and quiet. But this could not long continue.

It was a woman in Philippi who first accepted the Good News and gave impetus to the work of colonization for the Messiah; it was another woman who became the instrument for the arrest of the proclaimers. The great contrast in the two serves only to accentuate the variety of characters who came under the influence of the Message. The first was a business woman respected in the world of commerce; the second a slave girl manipulated by selfish owners for their own gain. One was under the tranquil influence of God's revelation; the other was an unfortunate victim of demon possession, having a spirit of divination.

This is not the time for a discussion of the many questions dealing with the subject of demons and their possession of the

bodies of men and women during the days when the Spirit of God worked miracles to confirm the divine testimony. It is sufficient to say that the Word of God teaches that personal spirits from the realm of darkness gained control and mastery over men and women and exercised power over them. Among the heathen who worshiped idols, the demoniacal influence was attributed to Apollo, who was regarded as the god of light, and who was thought to control song and prophecy, with the ability to inspire whom he would with musical talent or prophetic fervor. Greek mythology credited Apollo with slaying Python, a hideous serpent which lived near Delphi and devoured the cattle and men which came within reach. When Apollo arrived at Delphi, he slew the monster with special arrows, and from that time on the name of Python was given to him to designate his prophetic power as an oracle or revealer of secrets.

Those who were possessed by demons were regarded as being under the direct influence of Apollo. Their rantings and ravings were accepted as the voice of the oracle, and much gain was made by exploiting their words. There was a slave girl in Philippi who was a Pythoness. She was jointly owned by several men who derived much wealth from advertising her as a prophetess and fortune-teller. It appears that she was a victim of demon possession, and the foul spirit used her as an instrument of deception. One day, as the disciples were on their way to the proseucha, they encountered the female slave, who began following them, crying out in a loud voice, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation."

This performance continued for many days. The Pythoness, awaiting the arrival of the disciples each day, would take up her chant as soon as she saw them. The populace became aware of it. Paul was annoyed. Like Jesus, he did not want the testimony of demons. The cause he represented would suffer if the people concluded that he was working in league with Apollo, or was endorsed by the Delphian oracle. When the aggravation

became too great, moved with compassion for the victim and with respect for his mission, he suddenly turned and said to the spirit, "I charge you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." Instantly the girl was freed from the compulsion of the evil personality which had invested her, and was returned to sanity and a normal status.

The release of the victim from the domination of the evil spirit rendered her worthless for soothsaying, and thereby deprived her owners of any further hope of enriching themselves by exploitation of her power of divination. They flew into a rage and grabbing Paul and Silas, they literally dragged them to the forum where the colonial rulers, or praetors, sat to judge the cases brought before them. It was necessary to file an indictment against those accused of criminal act or intent, and the owners of the slave girl were reluctant to state the real reason for their anger, since it was not illegal to dispel a demon, nor was there any punishment assessed by law against one who drove out evil spirits. In this case, the owners made a direct appeal to prejudice. They stated three things relative to Paul and Silas—that they were Jews, they were disturbing the peace of the city, and were advocating customs unlawful for Romans to adopt or practice.

The fact that they were Jews would create suspicion against them at this time, because of the "underground movement" of certain zealots, who sought by every means known to them to arouse animosity against the Romans, and to foment revolution. Indeed, it had been but a short time since the Jews had been expelled from Rome, and the synagogues there closed down by law, in an attempt to curb seditionists who were circulating subversive propaganda, and organizing simultaneous outbursts of fanatical opposition throughout the Roman world. The praetors would feel obligated to treat dangerous resistance groups in the colonies as they were handled in Rome, and being already nervous and distraught by reports of guerilla activities elsewhere, they were ready to take drastic measures against any

who came in from abroad to disturb the colony, as these men were accused of doing.

While Rome was generally quite tolerant toward the gods of the people conquered by her armies, and permitted traditional forms of religion to continue in occupied territories, there was a law against the introduction of foreign and alien gods. It had long since been learned by experience that nothing else caused such social upheavals as the attempt to change religious rites and customs. Even captive peoples fought more bitterly for their ancient religions than for any other cause. The legal provision against bringing in new deities was intended to preserve tranquillity, as well as to guard against defections from the Roman gods in Italy and the colonies.

On this score the Jews were always a problem. Their belief in one God, and their definite aversion to idols and images rendered them intractable. The exile in Babylon had burned out of the nation a tendency toward idolatry, and they fiercely resented even the symbols of polytheism. This, coupled with a deep sense of nationalism, made them impervious to the influence of the mythology of Greece and Rome. There was exercised toward them by the Romans a feeling of contempt which always smoldered, and occasionally under undue provocation, burst into flaming anger. The defeated slave owners, recognizing this, were quick to accuse the Messianic envoys of being Jews who advocated customs which were illegal for the Romans to adopt. There was some truth in the accusation as measured by Roman law.

The situation was aggravated by the fact that a mob soon formed, composed of loungers who frequented the forum. Every city had its share of these human parasites. Those who were indolent and lazy, and who lived chiefly by their wits, lolled about the markets, constantly on the alert for something sensational as a diversion. Tiring of the street jugglers, magicians and sleight of hand performers, who did their tricks

for the small coins thrown to them, the crowd soon rallied when word was conveyed that the foreign Jews had been arrested. Moved by the hope of seeing the victims beaten with rods, the screaming, gesticulating group gathered around the seats of the praetors, demanding that the men be punished for infraction of the law, even though most of them did not even know the accusation against them. They were not disappointed.

The praetors, desirous of appearing as faithful guardians and executors of the Roman Code, ordered the lictors who stood near to strip the men of their garments and to beat them with rods. This judicial flogging was indescribably severe. It was not administered as the beating under the Jewish law, which provided a maximum for the number of stripes which might be inflicted with the lash. The Roman method was to beat with rods, applied with full force against the quivering muscles of the body, and sometimes continued until the unfortunate and hapless culprit was beaten to insensibility. The body became bruised and discolored as the relentless blows reigned down, and often the blood gushed forth when the swollen skin burst under the repeated attack of the brutal lictors.

In the case of Paul and his companion, it is distinctly recorded that many lashes were inflicted upon them. But this was not the end of their suffering. To add insult to injury, they were thrown into prison without being allowed to even wash the blood from their battered bodies. Aching in every joint, purple from the multiple bruises, sore and weak, they were turned over to the jailer, who was given a strict order to guard against their escape and to see that they remained in confinement. Under such positive command from the praetors, the jailer, laboring under the impression that he had under his care important and violent criminals, led them into the dungeon recess of the prison, and as an added precaution, fastened their feet in the stocks, which were kept for the more dangerous types of felons. The pain and torture occasioned by this form of detention can only be imagined. Unable to move or to change position, forced to

endure the stinging torment of throbbing veins, with stabbing darts of fire piercing every organ, the men were left in darkness and discomfort.

The midnight hour came, but it brought no cursing or screams of rage from the inner prison. The men in the stocks prayed to God. Their feet were fastened, but their spirits were free. Suddenly the sound of a hymn floated through the vaults of the prison. The other prisoners were listening. Never before had they heard such a thing. They were accustomed to vile imprecation and shouting, to swearing and vilification. But this was the first time they had heard an ascription of praise unto God. While they listened another sound was heard. There was a rumble in the bowels of the earth, and nature became engaged in a great convulsion. The prison rocked and reeled, and as the agitation increased, the very foundations of the building quaked and shook, until the doors to all of the cells flew open, and at the same moment the chains and fetters fell off of all the inmates. In their state of shock and amazement, the prisoners did not move from their places.

The tremendous upheaval aroused the jailer, who quickly looked about him and saw all of the doors standing wide open. The thought flashed through his mind that the prisoners had all fled, and knowing that if such were the case he would be subjected to torture culminating in death for delinquency in office, he immediately decided to commit suicide rather than to endure the disgrace and stigma of public trial. Snatching his sword from the sheath, he was ready to fall upon it and plunge it through his heart when Paul shouted loudly to him, "Do yourself no harm, for we are all here!" The astonished warden, thus halted upon the very brink of death, called for lights to be brought, and in their glow sprang into the dungeon area. Trembling in every fiber of his being due to the strange concourse of events, and smitten with fear, he fell down before Paul and Silas. The rumors he had heard concerning these men came flooding back into his mind and these, coupled with his

observation of their faith and conduct while they were in his custody, impelled him to bring them out of the prison and into his own private quarters, where he voiced the question, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

The messengers looked upon the faces of the members of the jailer's family who had crowded about them. They observed the fear and curiosity written upon those countenances. It was an opportunity afforded by providence to save souls, and their own personal discomfort was forgotten as they replied to the question. "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, and all your household." Recognizing the queries which would be provoked by such a reply, they began at once to explain. The story of the Son of God was unfolded in the early hour following midnight, and the hearts of the listeners were profoundly touched. The intention of obeying the One who sat at the right hand of God was announced by the head of the household, and in this decision all of the others readily concurred.

The jailer led his former prisoners to the courtyard where there was an ample supply of water, and here he bathed the wounds of Paul and Silas, washing from their stripes the blackened blood which had caked and hardened there. Then the jailer and his family, being led into the pool, were immersed the same hour in which they had made their fateful decision, and the family of God was enriched by those who were born again.

A great change had now been wrought. The prisoners, who had been fastened in the stocks by the jailer on the previous afternoon, were now made guests in his home. But they were more than that, for they were now brethren beloved, and toward them he demonstrated that love and hospitality which are so much a part of the new relationship in the Christ. Food was brought and placed before the hungry servants of God. As they ate, the members of the family clustered about the table, overjoyed in their new faith, thanking and praising God for the working of His power which had brought them into contact with

the proclaimers of His love for all men. Happily talking together, the morning hours passed quickly by, and dawn broke over the city of Philippi.

Soon after daybreak the sound of a knock on the door summoned the jailer. He was surprised to see the civic lictors standing before him, and more surprised to hear the message which they brought from the praetors to set the men free. His mind reverted to the order of the previous evening given by these same officials, to hold the prisoners securely. Had the earthquake aroused a superstitious fear which now caused them to countermand their previous order? While pondering this turn of events, the jailer requested the lictors to wait while he consulted with Paul.

Turning back into the inner room where Paul was resting, the jailer informed him that the praetors had sent word to let him go. He urged the apostle to depart without further delay, that he might go in peace. But Paul, recalling the rude and injudicious conduct of the praetors in the face of the mob, refused to leave. He arose and went out to where the lictors stood waiting. He said to them, "You go back and inform these Roman governors that they have beaten us publicly without proper investigation. We are Roman citizens and are entitled to protection under the law, but we have been cast into prison as common felons. We refuse to be spirited away secretly. You tell your superiors that if they desire us to leave, they must personally come and conduct us forth as becomes those who are citizens."

This message struck fear into the hearts of the praetors, who immediately realized they had violated three of the basic codes governing citizens. They had imprisoned citizens of Rome without due process of law; they had flouted the Valerian law which made it a crime to place a Roman in stocks; and they had acted contrary to the provisions of the Sempronian or Porcian law which denied to any man the right to punish a Roman

citizen with rods. Moved with fright, they quickly decided to appease the prisoners if possible, and in that spirit they went in a body to the home of the jailer, where they pleaded with the men to forgive their impulsive actions. With proper judicial recognition they escorted them out and requested that, in the interest of peace and safety, they leave the city and their jurisdiction.

Paul and Silas, upon being freed, went to the home of Lydia. Here they spoke words of encouragement and consolation to the little band of followers who formed the community of the saints, and informed them of the accession to their number of the prison guard and his family. The time for parting came all too quickly, and with the farewells bringing tears to the eyes of the faithful ones, the proclaimers set forth on the way to Thessalonica. They had succeeded in planting a small colony of heaven composed of active soldiers of the King, in the midst of the colony of Rome made up of retired soldiers of the Caesar. The leaven had been deposited in the dough. Only time was required for it to expand and influence others who had not declared allegiance unto Him who was mightier than Caesar.

In our day, when the faith has become stagnant, and is weakly professed by those who never expect to live by it, it seems incredible that a small group of pilgrims could so affect the world around them. But a familiarity with the letter written to them shows the powerfulness of their impact upon the culture of their day. It also reveals the closeness of the apostle to them and his really deep love for them through the years. It is time now for us to investigate that letter.

A Letter From the Ambassador

Contents

The illness contracted by Epaphroditus became more serious after he arrived in Rome. Day after day he languished, until it appeared that he could not possibly live. The apostle, in bonds, keeping informed of the condition of his companion in Christ, earnestly besought God in his behalf. Finally, the crisis was passed, and the sick messenger began to improve. Paul considered this as a direct answer to prayer. He regarded it as a providential act to keep him from having an additional burden to the ones he already bore.

Epaphroditus was deeply troubled, even after his recovery was assured. He learned that word had been conveyed to Philippi that he was sick, and also that the Community there was greatly distressed by this information. He was anxious to set their minds at ease by going personally to prove to them that he was again in health. He was torn between conflicting emotions. There was the fear that if he left Rome he might never again see Paul; on the other hand, he felt a sense of responsibility to the saints in Philippi.

Eventually, he presented the matter to Paul. With foresight and understanding, the apostle devised a means of offsetting the concern of the worried emissary. He asked him to go to Philippi as his personal messenger, and to carry an epistle of gratitude and instruction. Since Epaphroditus could not deny this request, and being desirous of seeing his home again, he readily agreed to the proposal, whereupon the apostle sat down and wrote the

letter which was carried to the Philippian Community.

It is our good fortune to have a copy of the letter, which we propose to examine carefully with you, that all of us may profit by an understanding of the will of God for a colony of heaven planted upon alien soil. It will do us good to study diligently the words of the prisoner of God.

The Salutation (1:1, 2)

Contents

> **Paul and Timothy, servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:**
>
> **Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

The letter was written by an apostle (Paul), and an evangelist (Timothy). The apostles were ministers plenipotentiary, acting as ambassadors for the absent King (2 Cor. 5:20). Unto them the mystery of God was made known by revelation (Eph. 3:3-5), and they were empowered to bind or loose, with assurance that their action would be ratified in heaven (Matt. 16:19).

Evangelists were heralds of the glad tidings, as the etymology of the term indicates. They were harbingers of the Good News, taking the message to those who had not heard it before, immersing those who accepted it, and instructing and training them until permanent officers were qualified and appointed. That Timothy served in this capacity is evident from 2 Timothy 4:5.

Paul and Timothy are designated *servants* of Jesus Christ. Because we use the term today to describe domestics who serve for wages, it conveys a different meaning than the original in this place, which means "a slave." The apostle writes, "He who was

free when called is a slave of Christ" (1 Cor. 7:22). A slave was purchased by his master and was not his own. He was the sole property of another man, and he acted only at the bidding of the one to whom he belonged. This is the state of those in Christ (1 Cor. 6:19, 20).

The colony of heaven at Philippi was composed of the saints, with the bishops and deacons. The word *saints* has to do with character. It is from the same word also translated "sanctified, holy." In relationship to God, these are children; in relationship to each other, they are brethren. As to intellectual progress, they are disciples; in relationship to Christ, they are Christians. In the primitive Communities men were not made saints by pronouncement of canonization after death. They were saints in life by virtue of the call of God, which summoned them from darkness to His marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9). Thus, they were called saints. This does not mean merely that they were designated as saints, or called to be saints, as the Authorized Version has it, but they were *called* saints— those who had heard and answered the call of God.

The word *grace* means "undeserved kindness." It is not favor bestowed upon a reciprocal basis, nor in payment of debt or obligation. The recipient of grace is wholly undeserving. He can claim no merit of his own as a reason why he should be so blessed. *Peace* is that state of safety, security or happiness, which results from a union of the spirit of man with the Father of spirits. It can be secured only through the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:1). Among the Greeks, it was the custom to bid farewell to friends by saying, "Grace be unto you." The Jews used the formula, "Depart in peace" (James 2:16), or "Peace be with you" (Cp. Acts 15:33). It is an interesting feature of the writings of Paul that he employs both terms in salutation, thus indicating the universality of his message.

ORGANIZATION OF THE COLONY

The creator of the universe is a God of order and system. This is demonstrable, not only in the natural, but also in the spiritual realm. The Community of believers sustains a relationship to God and men. They are obligated to love both, and this love must be manifested in a practical manner. It must be demonstrated. The organization and discipline ordained by heaven is designed to achieve this purpose. Thus the Community at Philippi consisted of saints, with the bishops and deacons. The responsibilities and functions of the officers can best be understood by recourse to three considerations: (1) The implications of the terms used to designate them; (2) the charges or instructions given to them; (3) the descriptions of their work written with apostolic approval, together with a study of the qualifications as specified.

The Community at Philippi was apparently fully qualified to serve the best interests of the absent King. They stood firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel. They were not frightened in anything by their opponents (1:27, 28). Although they had obeyed in the presence of Paul, they were encouraged to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling, much more during his absence (2:12). They were capable of shining as lights in the world, and of holding fast the Word of life, in the midst of a warped and sick world (2:15, 16). We must conclude that they were self-sustaining, self-maintaining, and self-perpetuating, and that this is the divine plan for a colony of heaven.

The word *bishop* means "an overseer, a superintendent." As originally used, the term had no religious or ecclesiastical significance. It was applied to those local officials of Greek cities who were charged with maintaining order and supervising the collection of taxes and other forms of revenue. The Holy Spirit employed the word to describe the work of guiding and directing a community of saints, which was the responsibility of the elders. These are specifically said to have been made overseers (Acts 20:28), and were instructed to take the oversight (1 Pet. 5:2).

The same men are called *elders* and as a body or group, they constitute a presbytery (1 Tim. 4:14). The word *elder* would have special significance to the Jews, as the word *bishop* did to the Greeks. There is a difference, however, in that the first has to do with qualification, while the other pertains to function or service. Originally, the word *elder* meant "a bearded one, an aged person." In primitive societies where there were few records or books, and where learning was derived from traditional accounts of ancestors and from personal experience, the oldest members of the clan were esteemed to be the wisest. Special regard was attached to them as counsellors or advisors. As the social structures became more complex age alone was not sufficient to assure wise administration, and the word took on additional connotations of wisdom, ability, and willingness to serve. The evolution of the word can be observed by the careful student of the old covenant scriptures.

Another word used with reference to the same office-bearers is *pastors* (Eph. 4:11). All teaching must be done on a foundation of previously acquired knowledge. The unknown can be grasped only in the light of that which is known. A revelation adapted to the needs of men must be given in the language in current use among such men, and any illustrations used to enforce the meaning of the revelation must be drawn from the life with which such men are familiar. A correct understanding and application of such illustrations and terms by those remote in time or place from the people to whom the revelation was originally vouchsafed, can be assured only by research designed to establish familiarity with the former way of life. Words are constantly altering. In their employment as the currency of communication they lose previous connotations and accumulate new variations.

There is ever a danger that those who study the new covenant Scriptures will apply to the words contained therein a modern meaning or idea, wholly foreign to that of the inspired penmen. The word *pastor* affords a good example of the reason

for our warning. The revelation of heaven was made to people familiar with a pastoral existence. Literally, the word has to do with sheep, and since these animals which provided the food, clothing, and shelter of the ancients required protection, guidance and feeding, it involved the idea of a flock-tender, or shepherd. The entire Bible abounds with allusions to the people of God as the sheep of His pasture, and the most beautiful passages of sacred writ are those which contain such figures of speech.

The very word *congregation* **is from the Latin** *grex,* **a flock; combined with a prefix which means "together," the community of saints is composed of those who flock together under the guidance of "the Shepherd and Bishop of souls" (1 Pet. 3:25). It is but natural that those who tend a local congregation, called a flock, would be designated** *pastors,* **since the word pastor means "a herdsman, especially a shepherd." The pastors of the community of saints are the elders or bishops. In Acts 20:17, Paul requested the elders of the congregation at Ephesus to meet with him at Miletus. He reminded these men that they were overseers of the flock of God at Ephesus (verse 28).** *Overseers* **is from the same Greek word elsewhere translated** *bishops.* **But these men were told to take heed to all the flock, over which they had been made bishops,** *to feed.* **This last word is the verb form of the same word rendered** *pastors* **in Ephesians 4:11. The word** *feed* **means to "tend a flock, to keep sheep." It embraces much more than throwing down fodder, or providing sustenance. The Greek language, famed for its keen distinctions, had a different word to express this limited action. The pastors, or shepherds, were entrusted with providing not only proper nourishment, but care, guidance, protection, discipline— in short, everything required to make the flock grow, develop, and remain in a healthy state.**

That the pastors are the elders, or bishops, is again evident from 1 Peter 5:1-4. Here the elders (verse 1) are instructed to "feed the flock of God, taking the oversight thereof." The

expression "taking the oversight" is from the same Greek root word as *bishop,* and James Macknight renders the expression, "exercising the bishop's office." Again the word *feed* means "to tend a flock, to keep sheep," and it is from the same root word as *pastor* in Ephesians 4:11. It is evident that the words bishop, overseer, elder, presbyter, pastor, and shepherd all refer to the same functionary. This will explain the reference of Peter to "the chief Shepherd" in the same context (see verse 4). The elders are really under-shepherds, tending the flock of God in their respective areas, and some day they will give account to the chief Shepherd and Bishop of souls.

An understanding of the work of a shepherd in the pastoral or agrarian society of the ancients is essential to a correct understanding of the relationship of elders to the spiritual congregation. Here, as usual, the revelation of God is its own best expositor and commentary. We can learn what God requires of any specific person or group by what He commands in order to merit His approval, or by His expressed censure against the shortcomings which incur His displeasure. In Ezekiel 34 is an arraignment of the shepherds of Israel. It is charged against them that they fed themselves instead of the sheep, and that they did not strengthen the weak, heal the sick, bind up the crippled, bring back the strays, or seek the lost. They ruled with force and harshness, and the sheep were scattered because of the attitude of the shepherds.

The shepherds were not only entrusted with the care of the sheep, but were accountable for them. One such shepherd, in reporting to the owner of the flock, declared, "Your ewes and your she-goats have not miscarried, and I have not eaten the rams of your flocks. That which was torn by wild beasts I did not bring to you; I bore the loss of it myself; of my hand you required it, whether stolen by day or stolen by night. Thus I was; by day the heat consumed me, and the cold by night, and my sleep fled from my eyes" (Gen. 31:38-40, RSV). Ezekiel declares, "Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the Lord:

As I live, says the Lord God, because my sheep have become a prey, and my sheep have become food for all the wild beasts . . . and because my shepherds have not searched for my sheep, but the shepherds have fed themselves, and have not fed my sheep, therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the Lord: Thus, says the Lord God, Behold, I am against the shepherds; and I will require my sheep at their hand..." (34:7-10).

It is because of this great responsibility the bishops must be qualified men. The requirements are twice listed in letters written by Paul, and addressed to Timothy and Titus. A study of the qualifications will show that they generally fall into four classifications: moral, domestic, intellectual, and executive. It is inconceivable that men be required to meet such specifications, who, upon ordination, become mere figureheads, relegating their work to others who contract to do it for hire. Perhaps nothing is more essential to recapture of the true ideal of the Christian community, than the restoration of the office of bishop to its proper position of dignity and worth in the eyes of the people.

The Community at Philippi also had *deacons.* **This word is merely an Anglicized form of the original, which refers to one who is a servant or attendant. There is nothing in the word itself which indicates the type of service to be rendered, but in the primitive Community it came to be applied in a special sense to designate those entrusted with the care of the poor, and with the collection and distribution of the funds essential to their care. Originally, in the Community at Jerusalem, the twelve served in this capacity. The burden became great, and the Hellenists complained against the Palestinian Jews, alleging that their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution of food and necessities. The twelve summoned the body of the disciples and proposed that they select from their number seven men in whom they had confidence to minister to the temporal welfare of the saints.**

Qualifications of these first seven required them to have a

good reputation, and to be full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom. After they were chosen by the entire Community, they were ordained by the apostles. It is specifically stated that they were chosen to "serve tables" (Acts 6:2). The word *serve* is the same one translated by the expression "use the office of a deacon" (1 Tim. 3:10). The apostle declares that men ordained to the office must be serious and dignified, not deceitful, not drunkards, and not greedy after money.

The colony of heaven, then, is composed of the saints, or holy ones, with their superintendents and administrators. Such a flock of God is complete as to organization. This does not necessarily imply that all of the saints will have attained to the same spiritual stature. In such a colony there will be babes in understanding, as well as mature ones. Neither does it imply that all of the superintendents and administrators will be equally gifted or talented in every department of spiritual life. But the colony is complete in that it has all of the parts designated by heaven to fulfill the purpose of the absent King. All that needs to be done in furthering His work in a colony can be done, and if well-pleasing unto Him, must be done, within this structural organization. To tamper with it, alter, amend, or otherwise recast it, is to interpose human wisdom over that which is divine, and is an act of rebellion. He who seeks to plant a colony of heaven today must conform to the simple organizational structure of the one to which Paul wrote at Philippi.

The Prayer of a Prisoner (1:3-11)

Contents

> **I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, thankful for your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. And I am sure that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. It is right for me to feel thus about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruits of righteousness, which come through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.**

A remarkable feature of the entire letter is its testimony to the attitude of the writer toward the circumstances in which he was placed. After he had been mobbed, beaten, shipwrecked, and finally committed to prison, he still finds much for which to be thankful. He regards those things which happened to him as keys which unlock a door opening into a realm of greater service. His letter abounds with expressions of joy and thanksgiving. The bonds of the flesh cannot fetter the triumphant spirit. The mind, unconfined by prison walls, soars away to former fields of labor, and the blessed factor of retentiveness allows the prisoner to stand again among those he

loves.

Remembrance **is from a Greek word meaning recollection. The mind collects again the impressions of the past, and out of them forms a mental image for the present. Such recollections may be stimulated by a letter, a friend, or even casual mention of a place or person. Upon every occasion when the apostle thought of Philippi, he expressed gratitude to God. He was always filled with thanksgiving in their behalf.**

Prayer **is an expression of the desire of the heart, a pouring out of the inmost feelings unto God. Like religion itself, it arises from a sense of dependency. The apostle labors to show the intensity of his feeling in behalf of the Philippians by assuring them he** *always* **remembers them in** *every prayer.* **The initial convert in that city was made at "the place where prayer was wont to be made." No doubt, the Community had often heard the voice of the apostle raised in their behalf. It was reassuring to know that he still bore their names before the throne of grace every time he voiced a petition to the absent King. His prayers were not blanket appeals for the Community as a whole, but were for every person in it, as evidenced by the expression "for you all." Despite his circumstances and suffering, the apostle regularly found time to pray, and he also took the time to mention the brethren who were so dear unto him. He did not forget the colony he had planted while absent from the brethren who composed it.**

One source of thanksgiving was their consistent partnership in the gospel. The word *partnership* **is from the same original word generally translated "fellowship." It means "joint participation." It is sometimes applied to a benefaction, or sharing with those who are in need, and is even rendered "contribution." While the idea of money is not in the original word, this constitutes one means of demonstrating fellowship. It is possible that the apostle so uses the word here. In chapter 4, verse 15, he points out that "in the beginning of the gospel when**

I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only." The word *partnership* is identical in both passages. The expression "from the first day" corresponds with the term "in the beginning of the gospel," both of these relating to the introduction of the gospel by the apostle into that section of the European continent. Moreover, the letter under review is primarily a letter of thanks to the Community at Philippi for the gifts brought by Epaphroditus. The joy of the apostle was not occasioned by the money, but by the spirit and motive which prompted the gift. He says, "Not that I seek the gift; but I seek the fruit which increases to your credit." Fellowship is a state or condition to which we are called. The sharing of our means with the needy is one expression of that inward consciousness.

The liberality of the saints at Philippi is worthy of remark. It began with their introduction to the Good News. Immediately upon being made recipients of the bounty of heaven, they began to share their physical and material bounty with those worthy ones who had sacrificed so much to share the spiritual things with them. Their giving was not sporadic, nor upon impulse. It was consistent and regular. They sent "once and again" when Paul was at Thessalonica. They did not forget him when he was out of sight. They shared his needs "from the first day until now." Those who help bear the burdens of men who make sacrifices to proclaim the Word to those who have never heard it before have "partnership in the gospel." They are partners with God and Christ, as well as with the instruments through whom the divine message is declared to a sinful world.

The circulation of the Good News is the work of God. The divine purpose is accomplished through human agency. It is only when men realize they are in partnership with God that their lives cease to be a matter of trivial existence, and they live above themselves. It was God who began a good work in Philippi. His first emissaries were summoned from Troas as the result of a vision. As each person whose life was touched enlisted under the

gospel banner, he became a sharer in the work of God. The fruit of that work now reached Paul in Rome, as he had once reached Philippi, to share with them. He expresses his firm conviction that God will perfect His work at the day of Jesus Christ. The word *sure* is from an original which means to be fully persuaded or positively convinced. There is no doubt in the heart of Paul, but what the purpose of God will some day be perfected. This does not imply that the human agents will always remain faithful. They may leave their first love, and desert the work. But the failure of men will not frustrate the plan of God. However, the apostle manifests confidence in the integrity of the saints to whom he writes.

His feeling for them was not a passing one. It was not engendered by the gifts which Epaphroditus brought, nor was it an emotional upsurge produced by the demonstration of their care for him. He had long since "learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and want" (4:12). His attitude was not the result of holding their money in his hand, but of holding them in his heart. The feeling of many preachers toward a Community of saints fluctuates in proportion to the support received. The motto of the apostle was, "I will not be a burden, for I seek not what is yours, but you." The very essence of the spiritual life is sharing. The apostle shared the Good News with the Philippians when they were in dire need of salvation; they shared with him when in danger of starvation. Their willingness made them partakers, or sharers, of grace.

The extent of the participation of the Community at Philippi in the labors of Paul is evidenced by his expression "both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel." They did not forget him when he was no longer able to visit them because of prison bonds. This very letter was evoked by their ministration to his needs while in prison. They obeyed the injunction, "Remember those who are in prison as though in prison with them" (Heb. 13:3). *Defense* is from an original which has come into our language as "apology." It

refers to a speech made in defense. It is possible the allusion here is to his first appearance before Nero, when all who were with him in Rome deserted him, and no one took his part (2 Tim. 4:16). Perhaps these Philippians conveyed word to him during this crisis that they stood with him, and their confidence in him was unabated. Suffice it to say that from the very beginning of their spiritual relationship, the apostle and the colony he planted had continued in a spirit of mutual love and concern.

The intensity of his longing to see them is shown by the fact that he calls God to witness to it. Such yearning is within the heart, and is not visible unto men. Only God, who searches the hearts of men, can testify to the reality, or genuineness, of the desire which wells up within. The affection of Jesus for mankind is the greatest demonstration of sympathy, compassion, and understanding. It is the ultimate, or maximum degree of affection, which is willing to sacrifice everything in behalf of its object. It was possible for the apostle to reproduce that love, for he testified, "I have been crucified with Christ, it is no longer I who live, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20). One cannot exhibit the love of Christ who has not lost his own life in the life of Christ.

We are fortunate indeed to have preserved for our study and spiritual growth the prayer of the prisoner of God for the people of God. We can be certain that the things for which Paul prayed are those which should characterize every Community of saints. If these thing's become a part of the life of a congregation, it will meet the approval of God. We have a criterion provided by which to measure our own attainments. A close scrutiny will reveal four great objectives for the Christian community.

1. Increase of love, coupled with knowledge and discernment.

2. Development of the ability to approve what is excellent.

3. Cultivation of purity of life and blameless character.

4. Production of the fruits of righteousness in abundant supply.

This prayer is as important for what it omits as for what it includes. It provides a decided contrast with our modern means of measuring the success of a congregation. In our confused sense of values and perverted emphasis upon the material, we are inclined to judge strength by the number in attendance, the amount of money contributed, or the size and furnishings of a physical plant. Yet all of these may be present, and the four qualities enumerated be almost wholly lacking. On the other hand, history attests that when the Good News had to be circulated by an underground movement, harassed and bounded into catacombs and caves, it was these characteristics which gave it strength and enabled it to triumph. It may be that the Community is decadent to the exact proportion of its emphasis upon the externals, and strong only to the extent of its emphasis upon the cultivation of the spirit. It will do us good to analyze the items in this prayer and try to fathom what we should be.

The life in Christ is to be one of constant and steady growth. In relationship to God and each other, members of the spiritual body are to develop a deeper sense of trust and regard as each day goes by. This requires an increase of love. Love is a responsive action. We love because He first loved us (1 John 4:19), not "We love *him* because he first loved us," as the Authorized Version renders it. We would not have known love except as it was manifested unto us. When we love, we set in motion an invisible current that becomes greater as it touches new lives and calls out the love which has been dormant within.

Love is of God. "He who does not love does not know God, for God is love" (1 John 4:8). "If we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us" (1 John 4:12). The royal law, that is, the king of all laws is, "You shall love your

neighbor as yourself" (James 2:8). To know how to love others as we do ourselves, we must first learn how to love ourselves. To do this, we must have a proper sense of values. We must see ourselves as God sees us. God *so* loved the world He gave His only begotten Son. That indicates the worth of the individual. On this same basis we should evaluate others as objects of our love and mercy.

It requires much training and self-discipline to grow to maturity in love. We tend to be selfish. We want to love only those who love us. But to be children of the Father in heaven we must love our enemies, even those who hate us (Matt. 5:44, 45). We do not attain this state of love at once. Our love must be nurtured and encouraged until it increases more and more. Gradually we will become unselfish and universal in our affection. It is essential that love be accompanied by knowledge. It should not be a sickly sentimentality, but an intelligent demonstration of genuine affection. The word *discernment* implies ability to discriminate, or to judge properly. We need to acquire a good sense of the relative value of things. It is possible to lavish attention and care upon the trivial and unimportant, and neglect weightier and more deserving matters. Our love should be regulated by a proper sense of fitness and right.

The expression, "that you may approve what is excellent," is interesting and worthy of study. *Approve* is from a word related primarily to metals, and has to do with the testing or assaying of ores or metals to determine their nature, purity, or value. An example is found in Proverbs 17:3, "The crucible is for silver, and the furnace is for gold, and the Lord tries the hearts." The Lord has a standard by which hearts are tested for dross, as silver and gold are tested. The Septuagint Version uses the same word for tries in the passage, as it is translated "approve" in the one before us.

Excellent **is from a word which means to differ. It is used in 1 Corinthians 15:41, "For star *differs* from star in glory." The**

sense of the language under consideration is a prayer that the Community of saints may be able to test or try all things, and make proper distinctions. This is an attribute of maturity in an individual or a congregation (Heb. 5:14). Perhaps no ability is more needed in the decadent Christian world of today than to separate the trivial from the worthwhile, the essential from that which is incidental, the primary values from those which are secondary. Even in the matter of spiritual vocabulary, great harm has been done in the loss of distinction in certain terms.

The ideal of character is found in the two words *pure* **and** *blameless.* **Character is not a gift, but a growth. It is cultivated, not bestowed. The exact form of the original for** *pure* **is found only here and in 2 Peter 3:1, where it is applied to a sincere mind. Literally, it refers to that which is inspected in the sunshine. Many ancient bazaars were dark, and buyers took the fabrics or articles for sale outside where they could examine or scrutinize them in the full light of the sun. The word came to mean that which had no hidden flaws or concealed defects, that which was free of all impurities.**

The word *sincere* **is from the Latin** *sine cera,* **which literally means "without wax." It was first applied to strained honey, which was transparent and clear when viewed in the sunlight. Later, the term was given a special significance. Sculptors in marble often sought to conceal the cracks in the stone by rubbing tinted wax in the tiny crevices. The inspectors would carefully examine the work of art, and if no such tactics had been employed, they would stamp it "sine cera." In its application to Christian character it refers to those whose lives do not have hidden faults that are glossed over. They are free from hypocrisy, deceit and trickery. Such persons have no hesitancy in being examined in the full glare of sunlight. They will meet the test when scrutinized and investigated.**

Blameless **is from an original which means "void of offence." It refers to one who does not stumble himself, and who**

does not place a stumbling block in the way of others. The blameless individual does no injury to another. He guards and disciplines his life until he is free from offense in word or deed. He does not violate the rights of others, nor wound them in any manner.

In his mention of the fruits of righteousness, the apostle specifies the origin, motive, and quantity of these fruits required of the saints. These come through Jesus Christ, that is, it is through our relationship to the Christ and by the indwelling Spirit such gifts are produced. By adoption of His teachings, by following His example, and by walking in the light as He is in the light, our lives are made to overflow with an abundance of the fruits of the Spirit. The liberality of the Community at Philippi was one of the fruits of righteousness (chapter 4:17).

Such fruits are not to be borne for personal glory or the approbation of men, but to the glory and praise of God. We honor God when we live enriched lives, filled with service and sacrifice for others. It is not enough to draw near with our lips, nor to merely honor Him with our mouths. Our whole existence must be devoted to the promotion of His cause. We are fortunate in being able to determine what the colony of heaven should be like, and we should strive to fulfill the expressions of desire in this prayer to the Father.

Ambassador in Bonds (1:12-14)

Contents

> **I want you to know, brethren, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, so that it has become known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ; and most of the brethren have been made confident in the Lord because of my imprisonment, and are much more bold to speak the word of God without fear.**

This brief paragraph in the letter was inserted to reassure the Community at Philippi that the imprisoned apostle regarded his present state as a providential arrangement for advance of the Good News. When the prison doors closed, a door of opportunity was opened. It affords an insight into the philosophy of the ambassador for Jesus, who could regard suffering, hardship, and cruel treatment as rungs in a ladder, by which he could climb to greater heights. This philosophy not only guaranteed that he would find contentment in whatever state was imposed upon him, but it serves to strengthen and bolster the faith of many who would be made to ponder the reason why such a man of faith would be subjected to such indignities. When a prison cell is made a center for dissemination of the Good News, it little matters that the doors and windows are barred.

The ambassador had long coveted the hope of visiting Rome. He wrote to the saints there, "I have longed for many years to come to you" (Rom. 15:23). He had planned to stop

"and enjoy their company a little" (verse 24) on his way to Spain. Before he could do that he had to go first to Jerusalem on a mission of compassion, carrying the gifts from the Gentile Communities to the needy saints in Jerusalem and Judea. On that trip he was arrested, and after having been made the victim of political aspirants for many months, he was sent to Rome as a ward of the government. His coming was not as he had planned or hoped, yet the very means employed gave him access to hearts in the city which he could not have reached as a free man.

The word *advance* is seen to be a military term in ancient communications, as are so many words associated with Rome in the days of the empire. When the Roman legions were engaged in extending their conquest to other parts of the world, they frequently had to go through trackless forests and jungles. A special corps of trained woodsmen preceded them, clearing a path for the marching men. These woodchoppers were dexterous and skilled in making roads for army travel. The word translated *advanced* in our text is applied to these. The ambassador in bonds regarded his arrest, imprisonment, shipwreck, and all that he had endured, as the woodchoppers of God going ahead to prepare the way for the coming of the Good News.

Although it might be expected that the detention of a Jew who was looked upon as a leader in a small sect called "The Nazarenes," and who was from a remote province would occasion no special notice in the city of the Caesars, it was not so in this case. The whole praetorium knew about the prisoner, and knew why he was there in bonds. There has been a great deal of controversy in years past as to the meaning of the "praetorium." This is important as bearing upon the extent of the Christian influence in Rome through the efforts of the apostle. Our translators have rendered the term as "the whole praetorium guard," and we are inclined to accept this as correct.

The apostle was probably kept in confinement in the

quarters of the *Castra Peregrinorum,* the barracks of the itinerant soldiers. He was forced to pay for these quarters in which he was constantly chained to a guard. As each guard fulfilled his time with the prisoner, he was relieved by a successor. By this means, in a few months, the majority of the guardsmen would have become literally attached to the person of the prisoner, and would have learned the reason for his detention. During the period of his confinement the apostle was visited by various ones of the saints who sought to provide for his comfort and welfare. Members of the guard who were present at all of the conferences between Paul and the brethren would gather considerable information relating to the charges against him, and such information would be augmented by their personal conversation with the ambassador chained to them.

The guardsmen were fully aware of the underground movement of the fanatical Jewish zealots who constantly sought to incite revolt in all of the provinces, but contact with Paul had convinced them that "the sect of the Nazarenes" was not a part of that movement, and that he was a victim of the prejudice of the Jerusalem hierarchy; a religious, rather than a political prisoner. Even prison guards sympathize with one unjustly incarcerated, and this very attitude created a favorable atmosphere for instruction concerning the Christ.

Imbued with a love for souls which transcended all bounds of nationality, the apostle told the story of the cross, and this message formed the basis of discussion in the barracks, so that it was soon common knowledge that the Jew of Tarsus was imprisoned, not for treason or other crime against the state, but because of his personal conviction that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah of God. The circulation of this knowledge was advantageous to Paul. It was so wide, indeed, that not only the praetorian guard, but *all the rest* knew of his innocency. It is not assuming too much to apply that phrase to the city as a whole.

The providence which destined that Paul should arrive in

Rome in chains had so worked as to use those very shackles to gain for him a greater audience than he would have had if he came freely of his own will. We are inclined to listen with greater sympathy to the plea of one who is a victim of some great injustice. In view of this manifestation of the outworking of God's grace, the prisoner could truthfully say, "What has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel."

Another factor, occasioned by his imprisonment, also implemented the spread of the Good News. "Most of the brethren have been made confident in the Lord because of my imprisonment, and are much more bold to speak the word of God without fear." There are many ways in which the imprisonment of the apostle could have inspired greater zeal and confidence among members of the Community in Rome. The fact that the tide of popular sentiment was running in sympathetic acknowledgment of the injustice he was enduring would enable the brethren to find listening ears attuned to any information concerning the Christ in whom Paul believed. It is not inconceivable that many Roman citizens who previously ignored, with contempt, those in Rome who believed in Jesus, now sought them out to question them about the grounds for their faith.

It must not be forgotten, that so far as history records, this was the first time an apostle of the Christ had been in Rome. Previously, those who proclaimed Jesus would be regarded as importing a foreign faith based upon the testimony of others. Now there was in the city a prisoner who had seen the Christ and talked with Him after He had been crucified by the consent of a Roman procurator. The fact that their declaration could be sustained by a witness who was empowered by the Holy Spirit was enough to encourage those who were reticent before to take the Message to all who would hear.

The presence of Paul served also to encourage the fainthearted ones by their frequent visits with him. We are

inspired to greater heights of devotion when we see another who suffers valiantly for a cause. The apostle never wasted an opportunity to stimulate those whose zeal was flagging, or whose courage was waning. A firm exponent of the priesthood of all believers, he sought to employ every gift possessed by men to advance the glory of God and enforce the truth of heaven. Surely no visitor ever left his presence without renewing his determination to do more for the Savior, regardless of the consequences or suffering entailed. In the midst of a crooked and stubborn nation, the saints now had an example to whom they could point as an illustration of the Spirit. The Roman world needed some sustaining force. The people, jaded and discontented, would find in "the faith once delivered to the saints" the hope of a brighter day and a better world.

It is probable that when Paul first stood before Nero, the brethren in Rome expected an immediate sentence of execution. In any event, they refused to be identified with him, and made no attempt to assist him. He later wrote, "At my first defense no one took my part; all deserted me. May it not be charged against them" (2 Tim. 4:16). But God had additional work for Paul to do. If Nero had ordered his death, some of the most powerful epistles in the new covenant canon would never have been written. Thus he writes, "But the Lord stood by me and gave me strength to proclaim the word fully, that all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth" (verse 17). This last expression was proverbial among the Jews for tyrants and despotic rulers, based on Psalm 22:21, and is employed by Josephus to designate Tiberius. We can be sure that it here refers to Nero.

The fact that Paul was spared the sentence of death, and allowed to live in a rented apartment from which the Good News was circulated, emboldened the frightened brethren. Paul wrote from prison asking the saints to pray "also for me, that utterance may be given me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an

ambassador in chains; that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak" (Eph. 6:19, 20). This attitude affected the saints in the city until they too were "much more bold to speak the word of God without fear."

We can hardly appreciate the full impact upon the colony of heaven in the Roman colony of Philippi, when they learned that the Good News was being so freely dispensed in the capital of the Empire. Everything which transpired in the seat of government on the Tiber would affect the remote colonial outposts. The ambassador in chains knew what rejoicing would be occasioned by the information he penned, and he wrote the more cheerfully and gladly, in anticipation of the result of his letter upon the hearts of those whom he loved.

Christ Is Proclaimed (1:15-18)

Contents

> **Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from good will. The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel; the former proclaim Christ out of partisanship, not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment. What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in that I rejoice.**

The Good News proclaimed to the world concerned a person. It was not a message about an organization, a system, or a plan, but about a man, Jesus the Christ. Unfortunately, not all who proclaimed the Christ acted from proper motives. There were some whose purpose was ulterior. These latter carried on their work in a spirit of envy and factionalism. We are not informed as to who these were who made the lot of Paul harder to bear, but it could well be that they were the Judaistic teachers who everywhere else were his opponents. The circumcision party was especially resentful toward Paul because he had freely taken the Good News to the Gentiles. Members of this faction dogged his steps, and it would not be surprising to find them at Rome. They were envious of the fact that Paul had personally seen the Christ on the Damascus highway, and of the success which attended his efforts. They were interested only in building up a powerful pressure group, and labored diligently to enlarge their party. In view of the fact that a warning is issued in this letter to the Community at Philippi to "look out for those who mutilate the flesh," and assurance is given that "we are the true

circumcision which worship God in the Spirit, and glory in Christ Jesus, and put no confidence in the flesh," we may be sure the apostle was still aware of the workings of this powerful sect.

The information which filtered through to Paul encouraged him, for there were many who proclaimed the Good News from an attitude of good will. They loved and respected the ambassador to the Gentiles, they knew of his sacrifice and labor to convince the Gentiles that they could be "fellow-heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 3:6). Now that he was personally restrained by his chains, they undertook to further his aim, by taking the message to all who would hear. It is declared that they acted out of love. They did not ignore the presence of the prisoner among them, and they were not embarrassed by his bonds. Regardless of the false accusations of others, they did not regard him as a betrayer of Judaism, but as an exponent of the idea that Judaism only reached its climax and culmination in the Nazarene. With a proper evaluation of his convictions, and with respect for the intensity of his purpose, they identified themselves with him, and took advantage of his presence in the city to advance the cause.

We have, in this brief paragraph, a contrast between the partisan and non-partisan spirit. The zealous advocates of circumcision had actually created a party among the believers. "So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcision party criticized him" (Acts 11:2). Their creed was, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved" (Acts 15:1). As they viewed it, before one became a Christian he had to first become a Jew. It was the mark on the flesh and not the faith in the heart which was a sign of covenant relationship. These acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah, and proclaimed Him as such. But they called attention to the fact that Jesus was Himself circumcised on the eighth day. They urged His conformity to the law as a pattern for those who acknowledged his Messianic claims. Their vision of the scope of

God's mercy was limited by legalism of the most pronounced sort.

Thus, the apostle says, "They proclaim Christ out of partisanship, not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment" (Phil. 1:17). He did not deny that they proclaimed Christ. He did assess the motive behind it and deplored the insincerity in which they acted. This is proof that men may present the truth and be hypocritical while doing so. The bitterest partisan can proclaim Christ, and many do, forgetting that they belong to Christ and imagining that He belongs to them. Those of whom Paul wrote, knowing that he was not free to refute them in public, doubled their efforts to proclaim Christ and to warp the thinking of the believers after their partisan code. They knew that such perverting of their hearers would serve as a burden upon the heart of the apostle during his period of forced confinement and helplessness.

The apostle, however, rose above the party spirit. He acknowledged truth wherever he observed it, and knew it was no less the truth although proclaimed by an unworthy or unscrupulous person. The party spirit cannot rejoice in the achievement or accomplishment of any good by one outside the faction. It finds nothing to commend in anyone except its own adherents. Paul rejoiced, not in the pretence or hypocrisy of the preachers. He did not condone their behavior nor justify their character. He knew there were some who learned about Jesus by listening to these men, and he rejoiced in the message, not in the messenger. His example, if followed today, would eliminate much of the jealousy, envy and rivalry in the religious realm.

Expectation and Hope (1:19-26)

Contents

> **Yes, and I shall rejoice. For I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance, as it is my eager expectation and hope that I shall not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. If it is to be life in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account. Convinced of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith, so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again.**

The student of this letter of thanksgiving must be aware of the exuberant gladness which surges through it. On every hand, and at every time, we encounter the words "joy" and "rejoice." It is difficult to remember that it is written from prison, but it serves to emphasize that, in the Christ, hearts may be free while hands are shackled. It was the invisible cord which bound him to the Lord as a slave, and not the manacles which bound him to his guard as a prisoner, that Paul noticed.

He relied upon the prayers of the saints and the help of the Spirit to effect his deliverance. The tenor of the letter indicates this refers to his liberation at his forthcoming trial, and not to

his spiritual salvation. He had been given a preliminary hearing in Caesar's court, and had been held in custody. Perhaps his accusers among the Jews at Jerusalem did not make the long journey to Rome to press their charges against him. Those who hired lawyers to present their case before procurators may well have become convinced that their accusations would seem like childish superstition to the emperor. Prejudice could not be aroused against a Nazarene in Rome as easily as it could be in Palestine. Many months had drifted by with the apostle still retained in chains. Now another hearing was imminent. While he did not know what the outcome would be, he was optimistic. At his first hearing all deserted him. No one appeared in his behalf. Now there were several who had been emboldened by his own spirit to defend him as innocent of any crime against the people.

The chief concern of the apostle was that he might face any eventuality with heroic courage. He was eagerly expectant and hopeful that he would not be ashamed when confronted with those who held the power of life and death in the empire. Others had recanted their faith in Jesus and denied Him under like circumstances. Paul wanted to do nothing which would grieve his own conscience or weaken the force of his testimony. There was more than a human life at stake. The envoy of the Lord considered himself expendable. The witness for Jesus was above every other consideration. The essential thing was that Jesus receive honor, and whether it was accorded by his life or death was not the thing that really counted.

It is in this touching passage that the Christian philosophy of life and death shines forth in its real glory. "To live is Christ." If his frail lease on life was extended, it meant just one thing. Paul would not use such an extension to acquaint himself with the wisdom of the philosophers, nor excel in earthly knowledge. He would not devote his energy to amassing wealth or accumulating treasure here below. He would not engage in pursuit of vain pleasure, or drain the dregs of the cup of

dissipation in one last fling. The singleness of purpose, the unified plan of existence, is seen in the fact that the center and circumference of the life of the saint was summed up in one word— Christ! Christ is life, so life is Christ. There is no life out of Christ, and in Christ is the sum of life.

"To die is gain." These four words challenge the worldly man. The concept they portray is counter to his every thought. To him gain is his end in life; to Paul the end of his life was gain. We associate loss with death, with the apostle the opposite was the case. Gain is from a word which means "advantage" and to Paul there were certain advantages which would accrue from death. It would enable him to realize a desire to "complete what was lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body" (Col. 1:24). He would be free from further insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities (1 Cor. 12:10). He would no longer be subjected to temptations. There would be no more danger of betrayal by false brethren. The dread of death itself would no longer confront him, for the conquest of this enemy at the last disputed barricade would mean permanent triumph and final victory. Death brings release from those ills to which the flesh is heir.

If the verdict resulted in liberation, the apostle planned no life of retirement or rest. He desired only to be back in the thick of the fight. There were other places where the Good News had not been heralded. There were men who had not yet heard the story of the cross. Communities needed to be strengthened and confirmed, problems needed to be met and answered. Life meant new adventures in the service of the King. Each day would be filled with fruitful labor and rewarding toil.

The thought occurred to the apostle that if he were granted the right to determine his own course, he would not be able to choose easily and quickly. He was torn between conflicting desires. The original language at this point is beautiful. It is nautical in nature, and portrays a ship in a harbor with sails

spread, and a wind blowing out toward the sea. The vessel is tugging at the hawser which holds it attached to the wharf. It eagerly awaits the time when the anchor is lifted and the journey can begin. Paul was desirous of putting out to sea. He wanted to embark on the journey from which there is no return to this fleshly bourne. But he was still anchored in the harbor. He felt it would be better for him personally if he could be on his way. If his life continued, however, it would be to the profit of the colonies of heaven.

The saints among whom he had labored would be enriched by the experience of seeing him again; those who had faithfully served would be encouraged to press on, those who had become weary and faint would be given strength to resume their tasks. New areas would be opened up, the truth would penetrate to remote regions. There was a great deal yet to be done, and being convinced of this fact, the apostle felt that his life span would not be summarily ended. He was filled with plans for visits among the Communities he had planted. He was stimulated by the thought that he could assist in their further growth and progress.

Citizenship in the Colony (1:27-30)

Contents

> **Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you stand firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear omen to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God. For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake, engaged in the same conflict which you saw and now hear to be mine.**

The original term rendered "manner of life" is of special importance in view of the title of this book and the nature of the Community of saints which received the letter from Paul. It is the word from which we get our English terms "polity" and "politics." In classical Greek it had to do with citizenship, and with the making and administration of laws. From this, it came to do with the proper conduct of a citizen, signifying one who familiarized himself with the laws and statutes, lived in conformity therewith, and insisted upon proper reverence for the code as essential to the maintenance of social welfare and community spirit.

In a Roman colony, such as Philippi, there was great pride in and constant awareness of the implications of citizenship. The population was divided into two classes. These were called *Cives* and *Peregrini.* The first word means "citizens." From it we get

our words "civic" and "civilian." The second means "strangers," or literally, "wanderers or displaced persons." These last were permitted to dwell in the city, but they were not Romans and were not accorded the blessings accruing to citizens.

It must be recalled that, in a Roman colony, the people sought to reproduce in an alien world the greatness and majesty of Rome. The citizens were subject to the Roman law, and this code of jurisprudence was administered by Roman officials. Reports of proceedings were transmitted to Rome, and there the records were kept. All matters pertaining to legal affairs were conducted in the Latin language, and all of the citizens were officially enrolled by name in the great capital city of the earth. Although each colony had its own supervisors and administrators, the final judgment rested with the distant emperor, who was frequently worshiped and revered as a god.

Those who were reared in such an environment, and had now been made citizens of a colony of heaven, would immediately understand the import of Paul's admonition, "Let *your citizenship* **be worthy of the Good News of the Christ." They, too, had been planted amidst strangers. Sinners are displaced persons, for sin removes one from his proper place and standing. Here, the citizens of the universal kingdom of the Messiah were to reproduce their capital city, the New Jerusalem, in miniature. They were not legislators, or lawmakers, but were subject to the law and principles conveyed to them by an absent King through chosen envoys, the apostles and prophets. They were all firstborn ones whose names were enrolled in heaven, and whose citizenship was on record in the city of the Great King (Heb. 12:23).**

They were to speak the language of heaven, holding fast the form of sound words, employing sound speech that cannot be condemned. (Titus 2:8). Each colony of heaven had its own supervisors and administrators (bishops and deacons), but these were not supreme in their own right. The final judgment would

be rendered by the King Himself, and from it there would be no appeal. With such a background, the Community of Philippi would regard with greatest interest a communication from the ambassador of heaven who planted the colony originally. Such is the letter we are now studying, and without knowledge of the circumstances involved, the casual modern reader, unfamiliar with colonial status, might miss a great deal of real value.

The "ambassador in chains" (Eph. 6:20) was not certain if he could again visit the colony at Philippi, but his anxiety was that whether present or absent, the reports conveyed to him might be favorable. Recognizing that the ultimate success of any colonial project is dependent upon two factors, viz., maintenance of proper relationship with the king and unity of the distant subjects, the imprisoned envoy was desirous of hearing that the citizens stood firm in one spirit, and strove side by side for the faith of the Good News with one mind. It is easy to see how essential were these things. Firmness, unity and service of all the citizenry in the cause of the King are basic needs in every colony.

It is lack of these things which today threatens the colonial system of heaven in an alien world. The citizenry is all too frequently composed of those who propose to have their own way, regardless of the will of the absent Sovereign. There is disrespect and irreverence for His law. Citizenship is nominal, rather than real or genuine. Men become citizens for selfish reasons and for social gain. There is extant the dangerous philosophy that it makes no difference what one believes. The distinction between citizens and strangers has been broken or watered down. No longer do the citizens stand together. They are torn into bickering, fighting factions. They strive face to face, rather than side by side. The clash of creeds, the din of human opinions, and the noise of jarring philosophies drown out the faith of the Good News. The "sound speech that cannot be condemned" is shouted down by "wild tongues that hold not Thee in awe." The greatest task confronting servants of God in these days is the restoration of the colonial aspect to the

communities of saints. Unless we can recapture that concept and be tied together by the invisible cord which links us all to our capital city, we will present to the world a tragic picture of sectarian strife and clash of partisan forces, hewing each other to pieces in the name of the very King we profess to honor.

Every colony of heaven will have opponents. The apostle was aware of the opposition at Philippi. He was not so much concerned that such opponents existed, for that was to be expected. It was the attitude toward the opposition which chiefly concerned him. The colonists of God were not to be frightened in anything by their adversaries. Fear of hostile forces could only do injury to the citizens. It would influence them to value life above the cause of Jesus. They would shrink from responsibility because of physical suffering, and thus lose their hope of eternal reward. Furthermore, fear reflected a lack of faith. It was unbecoming to those who professed an abiding trust in God. It was indicative of weakness.

The courage manifested in the face of threats, the refusal to engage in retaliation, the calm endurance of persecution coupled with rejoicing, these presented the heathen with a problem which they could not solve. They knew the language of force. They understood how to meet sword with sword, but they could not vanquish faith with the sword. It was a shield which no spear could cleave and no dart pierce. Such a manifestation of confidence in the power of God was to them an indication of their ultimate destruction by a power superior to their own, even as they were forced to admit that no power of theirs could wrest from the saints their hope of glory and salvation.

The language used in this connection indicates that the apostle looked upon the conflict of life from the standpoint of the gladiatorial arena. The saint is observed by a world of spectators. He is exhorted to stand firm, to hold his ground in the face of the enemy, exhibiting no fear or sign of tremor. The righteous combatant does not look to the spectators for the sign

which indicates that life is to be taken or spared. The token of his salvation and the destruction of his antagonists is from God. The highest indication of acceptance and recognition by the Lord is found in the fact that the saint is elected to demonstrate his faith by suffering for the sake of Christ.

The Community at Philippi shared in the conflict which Paul endured. The word *conflict* is from a term which meant to engage in gymnastic games, to fight, to participate in gladiatorial combat. Our English word "agonize" is derived from it. It is used in 1 Timothy 6:12, "Fight the good fight of faith," and in 2 Timothy 4:7, "I have fought the good fight." The saints at Philippi knew of the persecution Paul had endured in their city. He alludes to it in 1 Thessalonians 2:2, "Though we had already suffered and been shamefully treated at Philippi, as you know." He declares that he had courage to declare the Good News "in the face of great opposition." This last word is from the same original as "conflict" in the present passage. Like all true soldiers, the saints were to stand side by side, fearless and undaunted, with firm conviction that the battle would end in victory through Jesus, for this was their faith in the Good News.

Unity in the Community (2:1-4)

Contents

> **So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any incentive of love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfishness or conceit, but in humility count others better than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.**

In 1:3 the envoy of the Christ speaks of the joy which accompanies his prayers in behalf of the colony of saints at Philippi. In 1:27 he exhorts them to stand firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel. In the paragraph now under consideration he affirms that his joy will be complete if such unity as he has described is maintained. In order to enforce his admonition to harmony within the Community, he presents four facts which support the appeal and lend strength to it.

The word "if" as used here does not imply doubt or raise a question. In the Greek it refers to a condition which has been demonstrated to be a fact, one that has been fulfilled, and can thus be recognized as certain or sure. It could be translated "in view of the fact," and do no injury to the use made of it by the Holy Spirit. The first fact, then, which should incite to unity is the encouragement in Christ. Jesus was an embodiment of that spirit which produces oneness. In His relationship with the

Father, He could say, "I and my Father are one." To this fellowship all who obey Him are called, so that John could write, "Our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ."

Those who share in this spiritual communion should be impelled by the example and instruction of Jesus to cherish and nourish it. He is a traitor indeed who would prove to be disruptive and a disturbing factor to the peace and tranquility which ought to prevail under the orderly and benign sway of the Prince of Peace. The encouragement of Jesus is a vital contribution to the development of those who believe in Him.

The second fact is the incentive of love. The word "incentive" is from an original, which implies a word which appears to stand beside one for the purpose of stimulating him in a resolution, or to encourage him in a chosen pursuit or project. There is an indication of gentle, but firm, persuasiveness implied. It is possible that the love here under consideration is not that which we have for each other, although this is an essential ingredient of unity, but the love of God for us. That love acts as a firm tugging or drawing power, bringing us closer to each other by drawing us unto Him as a common center. "So we know and believe the love God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him" (1 John 4:16). "We love, because he first loved us . . . And this commandment we have from him, that he who loves God, should love his brother also" (1 John 4:19, 21).

God's love for man was not conditioned upon a state of perfection in the latter, for "God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). This furnishes us an incentive toward unity in spite of differences in temperament, variations in opinions, and personal shortcomings. If God could love us all in spite of our failings and failures, we can be longsuffering and forbearing toward others, patiently helping and strengthening them, working for their

good and for the ultimate glory of God.

The third point of consideration is the participation in the Spirit. The Greek word for "participation" is the one generally rendered "fellowship." No truth is more convincingly stated in the revelation of God, than that of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the heart of every saint, and the unity to which the apostle exhorts will more likely result from a recognition of this fact than from any other source. Indeed, the argument for one body is strengthened by this consideration. "For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, Jews or Greeks, slaves or free— and all were made to drink of one Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:12, 13).

Jesus promised that, during His absence, He would not leave His disciples orphans (John 14:18). The context shows that He proposed to petition the Father who would send another Counselor, who would remain with them through this age (John 14:16). This Counselor is specifically identified as the Holy Spirit (John 14:26). When Jesus sat down at the right hand of the Father, His envoys announced that all who reformed their lives and were immersed would receive the Spirit as a gift (Acts 2:38). It was affirmed that God gave the Holy Spirit to those who obey Him (Acts 5:32). Accordingly, the body of each saint became a temple of the Holy Spirit, who dwelled within, as the gift of God (1 Cor. 6:19).

The immersed believer thus becomes an abiding place of Deity, and partakes of the power, blessings, and privileges accruing from such an intimate relationship. The love of God is poured into the heart (Rom. 5:5). The believer is sealed for the day of redemption (Eph. 4:30). The Spirit in the heart is an advance guarantee of the eternal inheritance which will be granted when the body is resurrected, or redeemed from the grave (Eph. 1:14; 2 Cor. 1:22). The inner man is strengthened

with might (Eph. 3:16). The sons of God are enabled to cry out unto God as their Father (Gal. 4:6; Rom. 8:15). The deeds of the flesh are put to death by the influence and power of the Spirit (Rom. 8:13). The Spirit aids in our personal weakness, bearing to the throne of God our feeble attempts to converse with the Father, and interceding for us with sighs too deep for words (Rom. 8:26).

It is a sense of mutual kinship with God, through the Spirit, which causes His children to be drawn closer to each other. The selfishness, jealousy, and envy which divide and separate are put to death as works of the flesh by the benign, but powerful, influence of the Spirit, so that barriers are removed and walls of separation tumble. One who loves God cannot despise the temple in which He dwells. Love for brethren will be intensified as each realizes his relation to every other in Christ Jesus through the Spirit. A community of saints is an exemplification of the unity of the Spirit maintained in the bond of peace (Eph. 4:3).

The fourth contribution to unity is expressed by the two words "affection" and "sympathy." The first has to do with that quality or state of heart which is tenderly disposed toward others. One is moved by compassion when seeing others in distress or need, and that because of the deep love for mankind. The other represents the state of action which does something about the straits of others. When these fruits of the Spirit abound in the lives of all, there will be few difficulties arising between brethren, and those which do will soon be alleviated and eliminated by the thoughtfulness and care which acts in unselfish devotion to others. Quarrels will not be carried on, ill-feeling will pass away, when all pray for each other and seek the well-being of others.

The one thing which would bring greatest joy to the imprisoned ambassador for Jesus was a knowledge of the singleness of heart and purpose in the colony of heaven. The

word "complete" indicates a partial joy engendered by the faith of the Community at Philippi, which would only be made full by their earnestly striving together for the faith of the gospel (1:27). The desired status is described in a three-fold emphasis: (1) being of the same mind; (2) having the same love; (3) being in full accord. These are opposed to two conditions in the text: selfishness and conceit.

The expression "being of the same mind" literally means "thinking the same thing." This should be the goal of every community of saints. It will be noted that this was not a prerequisite to fellowship. Those to whom this letter was addressed were already in fellowship with God and each other. We do not enter the fellowship of Christ Jesus because we understand everything alike, but we seek to understand everything alike because we are in that fellowship. We come into covenant relationship with God because of faith that Jesus is the Son of God, but having entered that relationship, we grow in grace and knowledge of the truth. As we grow in perception and understanding, we mature in attitude toward each other and come closer to the ideal.

"Having the same love" is proof that this is a reciprocal quality of our spiritual experience in Jesus. It is lack of love which creates most divisions and schisms among God's children. A depth of love for each other will make it possible to weather most storms. There will always be differences of opinion and interpretation. This is to be expected. But differences do not produce division, unless we allow them to assume a greater degree of importance than our love for each other. Men may differ and not divide, but they cannot unite in the spiritual realm without love. It is the cement which holds the living stones together in God's great structure.

The colony of heaven cannot be held together by the oratorical powers or persuasive eloquence of brilliant men. Linguistic ability which would enable one to converse or

discourse in the very tongue with which celestial angels communicate, when unaccompanied by love, reduces the flowery speaker to the status of a noisy gong or clanging cymbal. Superior knowledge is insufficient as a cohesive force to maintain unity, for if one had the insight and prescience to make it possible for him to unravel all the mysteries of the ages, he would still be nothing without love. "Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up" (1 Cor. 8:1).

Mighty as is the power of faith, if it were possessed in such a degree that the possessor could speak the towering hills into oblivion, and uproot the majestic mountains and transport them to the midst of the ocean depths, such a mountain mover would be utterly insignificant in securing the good of mankind without love. Nothing is to be gained without love. If one sells his property and disposes of all his earthly possessions to feed and clothe the unfortunates of the earth, it gains him nothing without love. Of what ultimate value is it to toss mountains, food, or clothing about if while doing so, we sow the seeds of hatred and animosity, and increase "man's inhumanity to man"?

One may speak in many languages, have a profound knowledge, demonstrate great power, and contribute generously to charity drives, and still be impatient and unkind, jealous and boastful. He may demand his own way because of his superior ability, and be irritable and resentful when he does not get it. But "love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things" (1 Cor. 13:4-7).

"Being in full accord" does not refer to a state of abject conformity or blind servility. Our purpose and aim should be one. But we are at different stages of spiritual learning and development. There are babes, young men, and fathers in the spiritual as well as the physical and social realm. Not all have the

same aptitudes. "Accord" is the opposite of discord. Every member of a symphony orchestra does not play the same instrument, but discord results only when some member departs from the musical score. A group may act in concert without all performing the same functions. The meaning of the terms with which we have been dealing can best be understood in contrast with those which follow.

The Greek term from which we get "selfishness" is a very interesting one. Originally it came from a root word which had to do with wool, and from that it was made to apply to the various steps required to fabricate wool into cloth; spinning, weaving, etc. By some strange evolution of thought it was transferred to those who electioneer for office and court public favor by spinning a story of their own worth and accomplishments, and fabricating a pattern calculated to deceive and betray the unwary. We still speak of one "spinning a yarn" or of "a lie out of whole cloth." From the man who electioneered for office, the word was next applied to the party, or political faction which he represented. Thayer's edition of the Grimm's Wilke's Lexicon defines the word in the New Testament, "A courting distinction, a desire to put one's self forward, a partisan and factious spirit which does not disdain low arts; partisanship, factiousness."

In Galatians 5:20 the "party spirit" is listed in a catalogue of works of the flesh. These are printed as a warning, having previously been mentioned orally by the envoy of Christ for the same purpose. It is plainly declared "that those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Nothing is more fraught with danger to the peace of God's people than the spirit of partisanship. Those imbued with it seem to lose all sense of fairness and justice "not disdaining low arts." They will say or do anything which will advance the party, and stoop to any depth to gain personal victory. The injunction here is to do *nothing* **from such a motive. The party spirit is opposed to the fruits of the Holy Spirit.**

"Conceit" is from a combined form of two words, and in the original occurs only here, although an adjective form is found in Galatians 5:26. The first word in the Greek refers to that which is empty, futile, or useless. It was primitively applied to vessels which were devoid of content, or to areas which were barren and sterile. Later it was used to designate trees which, while making a showy outward appearance by heavy foliage were fruitless, sapping the soil of its strength and giving nothing in return. In an easy transition it then was applied to those who visited a king or royal personage bearing no gift or present.

The second word in the combination is often rendered "glory, honor." Actually, however, it originally signified an opinion, personal judgment, or fancy. In the strange evolutionary process through which all language passes, it came to refer especially to the estimate placed upon another, whether good or bad. In the new covenant scriptures it eliminated the latter, and took on the sense of a good opinion regarding a person, and as such a person deserved honor, reverence, or respect, it is frequently applied to the praise or glory accorded to one high in esteem. In the passage before us, the combined form implies an empty, senseless exaltation of self. The word "vainglory" is used in the King James rendering. "Empty pride" is a good term to describe the meaning.

The difference between factionalism and conceit is that in the first, inordinate love of party motivates every action; in the second, inordinate self-esteem or self-righteousness is the basis. These two are enemies of unity, and wherever they exist, alone or together, only discord can result. The only effective antidote is the one prescribed in this verse— humility. This word is also an interesting one to the student. The root term means "not rising from the ground," so it came to designate those slaves and others of low degree who indicated their abject and servile state by remaining prostrate on the ground while in the presence of the master or others of more noble birth.

The form of the word used here originated with the new covenant revelation of God. It was never used by profane authors, nor does it occur in the old covenant scriptures. The very implication was obnoxious to the heathen world. To them it represented not a virtue, but a sign of weakness and disgrace. It is remarkable that a quality which suffered from such dishonor was so elevated by the Lord that, as Archbishop Trench points out, the early Christian father, Basil, referred to it as "the casket or treasure house in which all other graces are contained." As used here it is in contrast to the word "conceit." That word refers to a vain, exalted opinion of self. This means "possessing a deep sense of one's own littleness, or insignificance, modesty, lowliness of mind."

Coupled with this is the admonition to "count others better than yourselves." The word "count" is from a Greek term referring primarily to leadership, rule, or command, which stems from a root word meaning "to go before." It has a secondary meaning, "to consider, regard, account." In his footnote to Grimm's Wilke's Lexicon, Joseph Thayer says it "denotes a belief resting not on one's inner feeling or sentiment, but on the due consideration of external grounds, the weighing and comparing of facts." This simply means that the saint of God should properly evaluate all facts and weigh all proofs, and from such critical examination develop a personal philosophy enabling him to recognize his own littleness and the worth to the cause of Christ of his fellow members, so that he can properly esteem them.

The word "look" means more than casually observing, or accidentally glancing at a thing. The original suggests attentive scrutiny and regard. The footnote by Thayer suggests the depth of meaning, "to direct one's attention to a thing in order to get it, or owing to interest in it, or a duty toward it." All of these, desire, interest, and duty, should prompt us to be concerned for the welfare of others. We are obligated to consider our own interests, but one is selfish indeed who is so wrapped up in

himself that he cannot see the needs of others. These four verses in this section summarize the great motivations which make unity desirable and possible, and also develop for us the attitude necessary to achieve it.

Example of the King (2:5-11)

Contents

> **Having this mind among yourselves, which you have in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**

To demonstrate that humility which enables one to count others better than himself, and the unselfish spirit which looks to the interests of others, the envoy uses the greatest example available, that of the Lord Jesus Christ. Since all conduct is an expression of thought, if the behavior is to be proper, the thinking must be right. One cannot develop a humble life while his heart is filled with personal pride; he cannot be sincerely concerned about the welfare of others while his thoughts are all centered upon himself. The writer does not here speak of all the characteristics of the mind of Jesus, but only of the thinking which motivated Him to sacrifice so much in behalf of others. The degree to which we should be willing to go in self-denial is illustrated by the extent to which He went to benefit us.

It is affirmed that Jesus was in "the form of God," and

whatever is meant by the expression, it refers to a state or condition, prior to His earthly advent, for He emptied Himself of it, in order to be "born in the likeness of men." Thus, the pre-existence of Christ Jesus must be accepted by every believer. The original for "form" occurs only three times in the new covenant scriptures, twice in this passage, and in Mark 16:12. Marvin R. Vincent in his Word Studies says, "We must here dismiss from our minds the idea of shape. The word is used in its philosophical sense to denote that expression of being which carries in itself the distinctive nature and character of the being to whom it pertains, and is thus permanently identified with that nature and character."

Archbishop Trench in *Synonyms of the New Testament,* **referring to the use of this passage by the early Christian fathers against the Arians, and by the Lutherans against the Socinians, concludes their reasoning cannot be sustained. He says, "Doubtless there does lie in the words a proof of the divinity of Christ, but this is implicitly, and not explicitly." Of the word "form" he says, "It may be assumed it is of the essence of a thing." Joseph Thayer, in a footnote in his** *Lexicon,* **says it differs from the word "form" (verse 8), "as that which is intrinsic and essential, from that which is outward and accidental." All of this sums up to the fact that Jesus was a possessor, or partaker, of the essence of Deity. The Word (Logos) was not only with God, but was God.**

Again the word "count" means "a judgment or decision reached upon consideration of the facts." It cannot apply to a hastily drawn conclusion, or snap judgment. The resolve to be "born in the likeness of men" with all that such a resolution entailed, was not made upon momentary impulse. Hebrews 10:5-7 seems to imply a conference with the Father, and a recognition and acceptance of a role which had been written "of me in the roll of the book." "Equality with God" as used here probably refers to the manifestation or expression of Deity, and not the essence of Deity. It was the glory which the Son had

before the earthly advent, of which he emptied Himself. This glory was the manifestation of His divinity to the principalities and powers (orders of celestial beings) in heaven. He willingly laid aside that honor and was made a little lower than the angels that He might suffer death. For that reason He could pray near the close of His earthly mission, "And now, Father, glorify thou me in thy own presence with the glory which I had with thee before the world was made" (John 17:5).

The passage asserts that although Jesus was a possessor of the very nature or essence of Deity, He did not, after proper consideration of all factors involved, conclude that the demonstration or expression of the glory which He possessed with the Father should be retained regardless of the consequences. Motivated by the will of the Father, and a love for fallen mankind, He was willing to relinquish the glory He possessed in behalf of the interests of others. This was the greatest demonstration of the unselfish spirit in the history of the universe, and demonstrates why Jesus and Satan are captains of opposing forces. Satan, elevated with pride (1 Tim. 3:6) sought to seize the glory of God and was cast out of heaven; Jesus humbled Himself and relinquished the glory, and was caught up to heaven. The conflict of the ages is one between selfish and unselfish spirits.

"Emptied himself" is a significant expression. The first word, which we have previously seen applied to vessels or containers, implies that Jesus did not seek by some devious means to conceal or retain a portion of His status. He "went all the way" in our behalf. The second word shows that this was a willing, voluntary act. It was not something performed upon Him, it was something He performed. Since the ultimate of His rejection of glory was the rejection of Himself by those whom He came to save, resulting in ignominious death, this points up His own words relative to laying down His life: "No man takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord." There is a wealth of meaning in the expression "I *lay down* **my life."**

The sacred writer runs the gamut of human language in portraying the extent of the humiliation of Jesus. The word for *servant* in the Greek is one, the origin of which is rather obscure. It is derived either from a root meaning "to tie, or bind," or from one meaning "to ensnare or capture." In any event it refers to a slave or bondman. Thus, the sacrifice of Jesus is all the more pronounced, for one who was in the form of God went to the other extreme and took the form of a menial slave.

The phrase "being born in the likeness of men," taken in connection with the preceding language, is another indirect testimony to the pre-incarnate existence of God's Son. "Likeness" is from a word which indicates a real likeness or kinship with man. Jesus identified Himself with our nature. He became one of us. Thayer says of the word in this place that it is a likeness or resemblance, "such as amounts well-nigh to equality or identity with man." The Creator became like the created, identifying Himself with the creature. Such a transformation is staggering to the intellect which meditates upon it with seriousness and sobriety.

The degradation was not complete in the assumption of human likeness, but "being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death." Here the word "form" is from a Greek word which refers to that which is purely external, the outward appearance of Jesus as observable by men. He was composed of the same physical materials as other men, and was subject to the same feelings of hunger, thirst, cold, pain, and suffering. In this state He became obedient unto death.

There is a difference in being obedient *until* death, and being obedient *unto* death. Jesus was never obedient to death as a master. He was the master, and He died voluntarily. He *laid down* His life. It was not taken from Him. The same distinction should be remembered in reading such passages as Revelation 2:10, "Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of

life." It is one thing to be faithful until death, a wholly different thing to be faithful unto death. The first has simply to do with patient endurance, the second with that *degree* of faith which will sacrifice life itself before giving up. Jesus came to do the will of God. He was obedient unto death. This does not mean that He was obedient all of His life, although that is certainly true, but He was obedient to the supreme test, even up to the point of dying.

In the Greek text no definite article precedes the word "cross," so that our version is correct in rendering "a cross." The idea is that the most terrifying, excruciatingly painful death that could be inflicted was by crucifixion. The heart recoils from the very thought of the shame, reproach, degradation, and cruelty of this method of punishment. Yet Jesus was not only willing to die, but He was obedient *even* to death on a cross. Of the word "even" in this instance, Thayer's Lexicon says, "It is joined to terms which are repeated with certain emphasis, and with such additions as tend to explain and establish them more exactly." It is difficult to conceive of the suffering contemplated in the words introduced by the particle *even.*

We have studied and meditated upon the greatest act of self-denial in the universe. One who was in the form of God emptied Himself and adopted the form of a slave. He did this as an act of unmerited kindness toward others. Because of this voluntary humiliation God has highly exalted Him. Thayer says this means "to exalt to the highest rank and power, raise to supreme majesty." This act of God in elevating Jesus was the result of the act of Jesus in humiliating Himself. So the envoy of the cross draws the conclusion that the path to glory lies by way of the road of self-denial. Those who walk this road must walk in peace, for peace is a fruit of humility.

In addition to the super-exaltation, God "bestowed on him the name which is above every name." This does not mean that God gave Him *a* name, but bestowed upon Him *"the* Name." The

Greek text contains the definite article. This passage has produced much speculation in an attempt to decide what name was meant. We do not think a particular appellation was under consideration, and much of the argument of the subject has been empty and futile. The confusion stems from lack of recognition of the fact that among the ancients "the Name" embraced all of the qualities, nature, and characteristics of a person. Thayer says, "By a usage chiefly Hebraistic the *name* is used for everything which the name covers, everything the thought or feeling of which is roused in the mind by mentioning, hearing, remembering the name, i.e., for one's rank, authority, interests, pleasure, command, excellences, deeds, etc."

Bishop Lightfoot says, "We should probably look to a very common Hebrew sense of 'name,' not meaning a definite appellation, but denoting rank, office, dignity. In this case the use of the 'Name of God' in the Old Testament to denote the Divine Presence or the Divine Majesty, more especially as the object of adoration and praise, will suggest the true meaning: since the context dwells on the honour and worship henceforth offered to him on whom *'the* name' has been conferred."

"The Name" bestowed upon Christ Jesus is not a mere designation which is better than, or superior to, all other designations in a given language. Rather it is a comprehensive honor embracing all of the majesty and glory which accrue to one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of God in the heavens. It is useless to contend for one designation or another, for none of these which we pronounce constitute "the Name" which is above every name. The writer continues by saying "that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow." From this some have concluded that *Jesus* is the name above every other. But it is not at the name Jesus that every knee shall bow. It is at the name *of* Jesus, that is, at the name bestowed upon Jesus.

The name *Jesus* cannot be *the Name* for it was given at the time of His earthly birth, whereas "the Name" was bestowed

after the crucifixion, and because of it. Moreover, the name Jesus was a common name worn by many, as it still is in some lands. It is merely the Greek form of the Hebrew "Joshua." But no other person in the universe can wear "the Name" in the sense it is here contemplated, for it is reserved unto Him upon whom it is bestowed by the Father, and at that name every being shall bow. The record does not say that after His death the name *Jesus* was honored by God, but "the Name" was bestowed upon Jesus after His humiliation was completed.

It is at "the Name" given to Jesus that every knee should bow. In recognition of the power, majesty, and glory now accruing unto Him by reason of His mighty exaltation, homage should be rendered by every living creature. There are three regions in the universe peopled by intelligent beings. These are the celestial, terrestrial and infernal realms. The first is the dwelling place of angels, the second of men, and the third of demons. These are here designated as heaven, earth, and under the earth, i.e., the nether regions. All revolt in the universe will be subdued by the Christ. He must reign until He has put all enemies under His feet. His is a rule of conquest, and to His sovereignty every created intelligence must sometime bow.

Just as every knee should bend in reverence to "the Name," every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. "Confess" is from a Greek term which means "to say the same thing as another, i.e., to agree with, assent." It also means "to declare openly, speak out freely." It is the same word rendered "profession" in other places. There is no difference between one's confession and his profession. The thing to be confessed is that Jesus Christ is Lord, that is, the ruler of the universe, all power having been granted unto Him at His exaltation. Such an acknowledgment will reflect the glory of God the Father by acknowledging the fulfillment of the divine purpose.

Citizens at Work (2:12, 13

Contents

> **Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.**

The envoy has cited a case of obedience to challenge the thinking of the saints. It was obedience carried to the maximum or ultimate. In view of this example, those who have the mind of Christ Jesus should be stimulated to greater heights of obedience. He reverts to his former statement (1:27) where he refers to their citizenship being worthy of the Good News, so that he might have a good report of their service whether he visits them, or is forced by circumstances to be absent from them. Now he exhorts them that as they have always obeyed in his presence, they should exert even greater effort during his absence.

In the expression "work out your own salvation," the words to be emphasized are "your own." They must not depend upon the ambassador for Christ, but upon their own efforts to grow in grace and knowledge. The statement does not imply that salvation can be obtained or secured by meritorious works, for this would contradict other passages. The contrast is not between faith and works, or grace and works, but between individual effort and dependence upon the presence and labors of another. If the community of saints at Philippi looked to Paul

to do their work for them and placed their hope in his efforts, when he was absent they would cease to function. Instead they are urged to exert greater effort during his absence.

Bishop Lightfoot suggests that the expression "fear and trembling" means "a nervous and trembling anxiety to do right." Fear is not morbid terror, nor is it a dread of God, for the next verse would dispel all such emotions. It is a sensible regard of the greatness of the goal to be attained, coupled with a recognition of personal weakness and shortcomings, which will inspire to anxious service coupled with prayer for divine aid.

To assure the saints that they are not alone during his absence, the apostle refers to the fact that God is at work in them. The statement has led some to reason to a false conclusion. They reason that since God works in the saints, and since there is no merit in their own works, there is no effort required of the saints. But the statement of the apostle that "God is at work in you" was not made to discourage them from working, but for the very opposite reason, to encourage them to "work out their own salvation." Instead of God being active and the saints passive, the latter were to be active with God.

The word "work" is from a Greek word which has been transliterated into our English word "energy." It means to be operative, exert power, be active, to produce effect. God produces a certain effect in our lives. He accomplishes a specific result. That effect was not said to be salvation. The effect produced in us is to will and to work. Those who will not to work, or who teach others not to do so, are certainly not motivated by God. As to how God is at work in His saints, we may not be able to determine. There is ever a mystery in how energy achieves its effect. This is true of magnetic energy, electrical energy, atomic energy, and energy within any other field. We can see the effect, we can utilize the energy, even though we can neither define nor describe it. So it is with divine energy.

Just as in the case of magnetic or atomic energy, we can in this instance also recognize certain laws of function. One is that divine energy as applied to ourselves does not operate independent of human will. The will cannot be compelled or forced. It can be motivated, but if it is forced into a pattern it is not exercise of will at all. So God is not at work by compulsion. His energy is to direct us *to will.* Whatever energy or force is employed, it cannot be physical, for physical force has no direct effect on the will. You cannot make a man think a certain way by beating him, incarcerating him in prison, or starving him. He will think what he chooses or elects to think. The only force which can change the will is moral force in the realm of reason or rational process. It has been frequently said that man is a *free* moral agent. The word "free" is redundant.

A moral agent must be free. If he is not free, he is not a moral agent. The divine power in us is to produce the effect of "willing and working." That energy must always be exerted in harmony with the divine laws or principles governing its application to moral agents. The freedom to choose or will must not be abrogated. Man must not be made a machine. A rational being must not become a robot.

The result of willing and working in harmony with God is "his good pleasure." The words "good pleasure" are from a Greek word which also means "will, choice." Then it is extended to mean "goodwill, delight, pleasure, satisfaction." It can thus be seen that we are motivated by a love for God who works in us to will and to work in conformity with His will. This is for our everlasting happiness as well as for His good pleasure.

Shining Lights (2:14-18)

Contents

> **Do all things without grumbling or questioning, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain. Even if I am to be poured as a libation upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me.**

The attitude manifested in obedience will have much to do with the effect of such obedience upon others. It is not only important that we do all things, but that we do them without grumbling or questioning. "Grumbling" is from a Greek word which originally applied to the cooing of doves, and later to those who secretly conferred and conspired together. Since such clandestine conspiracy often resulted in disagreement and debate, the word was used to describe such a condition, and then to "querulous discontent" as defined by Thayer, who says it is used here as the opposite of a "cheerful and willing mind."

"Questioning" is from a Greek word expressing the mental process by which one deliberates or revolves various ideas and reasons in his mind, seeking for a satisfactory solution. Since such a person examines or questions each recurring idea, and hesitates in the acceptance of any, the word took on a special meaning about which Thayer says, "When in reference to what

ought to be done, hesitation, doubting." One has no right to grumble about or question the requirements of God, since all of these are for our good.

"Blameless" is from a word which referred to one against whom no charge can be brought and sustained by evidence, therefore, one who does not deserve or merit censure. Accusation may be made against an innocent person, as it was against Jesus, but such a person is "blameless" if the evidence does not convict him of the fault.

"Innocent" is from a term which meant "unmixed, not mingled together." It was applied to wine which was not diluted with water, and to metals which had no alloy. In reference to the heart, it designated a condition in which there was no mingling of evil, and a freedom from guile. It can be readily perceived that the children of God who maintained a blameless and innocent character would be *without blemish.* **This expression primitively was used to designate one who had no physical flaw or deformity, no noticeable marks or disfiguration. In its spiritual or ethical application it is merely a re-statement of the condition of God's children who are blameless and innocent.**

"Crooked" is from a Greek term meaning "curved" and was applied to the twisting, winding trails which were created by following the path of least resistance. An instance of this usage will be found in Luke 3:5, where John the Immerser is regarded as a highway builder who will straighten out the crooked road. The children of God should set a straight course, unaffected by circumstances. The route has been planned and mapped for us. It should be followed over hills and through valleys, without wandering or deviation.

"Perverse" is from a word meaning "to distort, to turn aside." Thayer says it means "to turn aside from the right path." The generation of mankind is "crooked" because it seeks to walk in paths marked out by tradition and custom; it is "perverse"

because it continues to turn out of the right path. These are the two evils which the prophet charged against Israel, at God's instruction, "They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn out for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water."

"Generation" is from a word which primarily has to do with "begetting," but which eventually was extended to cover the whole process of gestation and birth. By logical extension it was made to refer to those who had been begotten, and especially to the descendants of the same progenitor, that is, to men of the same stock. Since such men would ordinarily be distinguished from others by certain inherited or acquired characteristics, the term began to be applied to "a race of men very like each other in endowments, pursuits, character," as Thayer states it. One more step led to its use to designate "the whole multitude of men living at the same time." Those who are begotten of God are distinct and apart in speech, thought, and deed from the world of unregenerate humanity. They are to be blameless and innocent as children of God in the midst of a world of men who are crooked and perverse. No passage in Revelation portrays more vividly the distinction that exists between "children of Light" and "children of darkness."

The word from which we get "lights" is an interesting one. It means that which gives light, that is "an illuminator." It directly applies to the heavenly bodies, and is used in classical Greek to designate the sun and moon, which the Word of God says were created "to give light upon the earth." Since Philippians 3:20 informs us that the children of God are citizens of heaven, they are actually "heavenly bodies" shining in the world. Archbishop Trench points out that the "world" is not the ethical or moral realm, for this is covered by the expression "crooked and perverse generation," but it is the material world. The children of God have been placed in the material world to shine as luminaries, or stars.

"Holding fast" is the translation in the Revised Standard Version of a word translated "holding forth" in the King James Version. It is obvious that there is a difference in holding fast to a thing, and in holding it forth to others. It is difficult to determine which idea should prevail in this instance, for the word in classical usage sometimes means "to have in possession, to hold," and again, "to hold towards, to present." It is used in the case of extending a gift to another, or of holding out a glass of wine toward a guest. In either application no injury is done to the sacred writings, since we are to hold fast and cherish the Word of life, and also to extend or offer it to others.

"The day of Christ" is the time of final accounting, the day of judgment. "Proud" is from a word very rarely used in profane literature. It is defined by Thayer as "that of which one glories, or can glory." Perhaps the word "glory" would be a better rendering because of the modern connotation of "proud." The fidelity of the saints at Philippi would be a ground for glorying when the ambassador made his final report to the King.

"Run" is from a word of athletic bearing. It refers to the type of exertion in which one who runs a race summons his last ounce of energy, and expends his complete strength in an attempt to gain a goal. "Labor" is also from a word which refers to the act of working to the point of physical exhaustion. The employment of these terms is indicative of the supreme effort made by the apostle at all times, and without relaxation.

The apostle had not only run and labored to the point of exhaustion, but he is ready to die for the cause. The description of death is very striking. He speaks of it as being "poured as a libation upon the sacrificial offering of your faith." It was customary in pagan rites to pour wine or other liquid upon the bodies of the sacrifices being burned in worship of the gods. The Jews also had their drink offerings which were poured out upon the sacrifices and burnt offerings. The libation was not the sacrifice, but was deemed inferior to it, a minor part of the

ritual. In humility, the envoy of Jesus regards his own blood as the wine poured out upon the sacrifice of their faith. The red blood pouring from his veins would be insignificant compared to their sacrifice given in fidelity to God. Viewed in this light, as an offering to God, his death could be a cause of rejoicing, and he encourages them to so regard it. His death would be the goal of his race and labors which had been carried out with such fervor.

A Colonial Messenger (2:19-24)

Contents

> **I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I may be cheered by news of you. I have no one like him, who will be genuinely anxious for your welfare. They all look after their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. But Timothy's worth you know, how as a son with a father he has served with me in the gospel. I hope therefore to send him just as soon as I see how it will go with me; and I trust in the Lord that shortly I myself shall come also.**

Timothy is the Anglicized form of Timotheus. This young man, one of the most constant companions of Paul, was immersed by Paul while on a tour through Asia Minor, which led through Lystra, the home town of Timothy. The mother of Timothy was a Jewish woman who also believed in the Messiah, but the father of Timothy was a Greek. When Paul returned through Lystra on a visit among the Communities he had planted, Timothy was recommended unto him, and he learned that certain ones by prophetic utterance had revealed that the young man would make a valiant soldier in the field. Accordingly, the bishops of the Community laid their hands upon him and thus ordained him as an evangelist. At the same time, the ambassador of the Christ laid his hands personally upon Timothy and conveyed to him a spiritual gift to be exercised in "power and love and self-control."

Because of Jewish prejudice it was deemed necessary that

Timothy be circumcised, and to this the ambassador personally attended, so that the influence of the young man would not be impaired in the synagogues or other Jewish circles. The tribute paid to Timothy in the letter to the Community at Philippi is a verification of the prophetic utterance which singled him out for the task he performed so creditably. Paul entrusted him with great responsibility and dispatched him on missions of the greatest importance.

Since hope is a combination of desire and expectation, the apostle anticipated sending Timothy as a personal emissary. This hope was "in the Lord Jesus," which indicates that every thought and act of Paul was within the realm of the will of the Lord. He conceived of himself as being in the Lord, and thus, every plan and purpose were in recognition of this relationship. The purpose of sending Timothy was that he might bring back a first-hand account of the faith and service of the remote outpost. Nothing would so relieve the burden of his imprisonment as the news conveyed to the apostle of the unity and sacrifice of the saints of God.

There were no doubt many in Rome who were very sincere and anxious to aid the apostle, but of those who were in a position which would allow them to be free to make the long journey to Philippi, there was not another person as genuinely concerned as was Timothy. "Genuinely" is from a term originally applied to legitimacy of birth. It signified one who could establish his parentage beyond doubt, and thus be admissible to full citizenship rights. It also was applied to documents which were not forgeries and therefore, were genuine. The interest of Timothy in the colony of heaven was not a feigned one. He was sincerely anxious for their welfare, and would assist them in any manner possible while among them, and return a true account of their state to the apostle.

Others who were free to go were more concerned with their personal welfare and wrapped up in their own interests.

They were not disposed to make such a hazardous journey, nor endure the necessary hardships. Their own interests took precedence in their thoughts over those of Jesus Christ. This indictment can come with equal force to many believers today who are willing to make a profession provided it does not interfere with their own interests.

"Worth" has to do with character that has been demonstrated and proven by testing. The Community at Philippi knew Timothy. The saints were acquainted with his courage, fortitude and willing spirit. They had seen him manifest faithfulness under the most trying circumstances. They realized the closeness of the apostle and his younger companion, for in the service of the gospel, Timothy was as a son with a father.

The one thing that temporarily held up arrangements was the fact that Paul did not as yet know the outcome of his imprisonment. He was not sure just what awaited him—liberation or the sword of an executioner. As soon as he learned of his impending fate he would carry through the plan now proposed, and with that optimism born of faith, he even hoped to visit the beloved brethren in the distant colony personally. Once more the expression "in the Lord" shows how every thought was centered on the fact that this relationship was the center and circumference of life itself.

Man of Honor (2:25-30)

Contents

> **I have thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, and your messenger and minister to my need, for he has been longing for you all, and has been distressed because you heard that he was ill. Indeed he was ill, near to death. But God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. I am the more eager to send him, therefore, that you may rejoice at seeing him again, and that I may be less anxious. So receive him in the Lord with all joy; and honor such men, for he nearly died for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete your service to me.**

Epaphroditus is not mentioned in any of the other writings of Paul. All we know of him we gather from the letter under review. He was a member of the Community at Philippi, and had made the arduous journey to Rome to bear the gifts of the saints unto Paul (chapter 4:18). In connection with that task he contracted such serious illness that he was very close to death. He recovered from his malady and the apostle proposes to send him back to the Community at Philippi as a bearer of this letter.

In his relationship to Paul, Epaphroditus is called a brother, a fellow worker, and a fellow soldier. The first indicates a common spiritual parentage. We are brothers because we are members of the same family. It is a common origin which creates brotherhood. "For he who sanctifies and they who are sanctified have all one origin. That is why he is not ashamed to call them

brethren" (Heb. 2:11).

The second term indicates a mutual service. Paul and Epaphroditus were engaged in the same field of labor. They did not necessarily have the same office, for one was an apostle of Jesus Christ, the other an apostle of a local community. It was not necessary that they be equally gifted or perform the same functions, but they were laboring together for the same objectives. The term "fellow soldier" indicates that the ambassador regarded the world as an area of conflict and combat. There is a spirit of comradeship which binds together those who endure the same hardships on the field of battle, and Epaphroditus was serving under the same Captain as Paul.

In his relationship to the Philippian Community, Epaphroditus was a messenger and minister to the needs of Paul. The first word is from the same word as "apostle," which actually is merely the Anglicized form of the Greek term. It means one who is sent on a mission. Like many other terms, it has taken on a special theological significance it did not have originally. It implies or requires three things: a sender, one who is sent, and a mission or message. In this instance the Community of saints did the sending, the missionary was Epaphroditus, and the mission was to supply the needs of the ambassador in chains. "Minister" has also taken on a theological import it did not have when the Holy Spirit used the term. It simply means "a servant" without regard to the type or kind of service rendered. It was never a title or designation for a particular functionary in the Word of God.

The frequency of communication along such Roman roads as *Via Egnatia* **is illustrated in the case of the sickness of Epaphroditus. He had made the journey to Rome and became very ill. News of this was carried back to Philippi, and tidings of their reaction had been returned to Rome. Accordingly, the messenger was in distress because he knew the brethren were concerned about his condition. He longed to see them that they**

might be assured by his presence of his complete recovery. It was this longing which made it possible for him to leave Paul at this time.

The gravity of the illness of Epaphroditus is emphasized by the words, "Indeed he was ill, near to death." This case is proof that the miraculous gift of healing bestowed upon the apostles could not be used indiscriminately or to relieve personal suffering and inconvenience. Paul could not remove the "thorn in the flesh" from which he suffered, he left Trophimus sick at Miletus, and he could not cure Epaphroditus. Yet he regarded the recovery of his companion as an indication of God's mercy, and he felt that this mercy was granted to himself as much as to the sick man. God spared him "sorrow upon sorrow." If this noble brother had died the apostle would have regarded the sacrifice as having been made in his own behalf, since the purpose of the trip during which the sickness was incurred was to relieve his needs. This would have added a burden of grief to the sorrow resulting from his imprisonment, privation, and confinement which restricted his travel among those whom he loved.

No doubt Paul would have liked to retain Epaphroditus, whose presence meant so much to him during his imprisonment. But he was eager for the saints at Philippi to see the one about whom they had been concerned, and have the assurance of his presence. In their rejoicing at his restoration the apostle could join in spirit, and his anxiety would be relieved when the fellow laborer was restored to those who had dispatched him on his mission of love.

Men who hazard their lives for the cause of Christ should be regarded with a great degree of respect and honor. They are heroes in the greatest conflict on earth. Not every person in the Lord is willing to risk his all that the Word of the Lord may progress, and those who are should be accorded the honor to which all are entitled who rise to heights "above and beyond the

call of duty." Apparently Epaphroditus made the return journey to his home safely, carrying the letter which still remains as evidence of that fact, and as a monument to his fidelity.

The Workers of Evil (3:1-3)

Contents

> **Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things is not irksome to me, and it is safe for you. Look out for the dogs, look out for the evil-workers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh. For we are the true circumcision, who worship God in spirit, and glory in Christ Jesus, and put no confidence in the flesh.**

The word "finally" is used as a summarization of the whole aim of the Christian life. The attitude which we must manifest is one of joy. This letter was written by a prisoner in chains to a people destined to undergo severe trials in a pagan environment, and yet the theme is rejoicing.

It is possession of such joy produced by unshakable trust which sets the Christian apart from the pessimism and skepticism of the world. This joy which accompanies peace is given by God (Rom. 15:13). It is a fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22). Jesus said to the apostles, "I will see you again and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you" (John 16:22). It is true now that men can neither bestow nor rob one of this joy, for it comes not from relationship with men, but with Christ.

It is possible Paul had previously written to the Philippians. He wrote a great deal over a period of sixteen years, and some of his writings have not been preserved. Again, when he spoke of writing the same things he may have referred to the

several references to joy and rejoicing in this epistle.

In any event, he did not find it boring or irksome to repeat a thing if he felt that it deserved emphasis. His concern was for the safety of his hearers, and it was important that they be reminded to rejoice in the Lord, rather than in circumcision or legalistic performances. They were under constant pressure from Judaizing teachers to conform to the Mosaic law and to boast of their attainments under its provisions. James wrote, "As it is you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil" (James 4:16).

The warning to *look out* **is repeated three times. In each instance the thing of which they were to beware is preceded by the definite article showing that the apostle had a specific set of men in mind. There is little question that these were Judaizers.**

Frequently in the Bible men are described as animals, because of the characteristics which they possess in common. Thus Herod was referred to as a fox (Luke 13:32), and false teachers are called wolves (Acts 20:29). God's people are called sheep (John 10:3), and Jesus is called the Lion of the tribe of Judah, because of His prevailing strength (Rev. 5:5).

The dog was regarded as an especially unclean animal. It must be remembered that dogs were not so much household pets in ancient cities such as Philippi, as they were shrinking scavengers of streets and alleys. They often formed packs to roam the towns and surrounding areas, and were a menace to children and others.

One who wanted to illustrate the lowest form of persons used the dog as a symbol. This is apparent in such references as 1 Samuel 24:14 and 2 Kings 8:13. The dog returning to his own vomit became proverbial of the individual who lapsed back into his previous state of immorality and wickedness after having been cleansed (Prov. 20:11; 2 Peter 2:22). The snapping, snarling

dog was used as a type of greedy individuals fighting others for everything they could get (Is. 56:11).

To the Jew, the dog was especially degraded, because it ate all kinds of flesh and garbage. From the very inception of the law it was provided that such meat as was unfit for human consumption should be flung to the dogs (Ex. 22:31). It was this fact which caused Jews to refer to Gentiles as dogs. The Rabbis had a saying that, "The nations of the world are like dogs." Acceptable food was not thrown to dogs, which illustrates the saying of Jesus to the Canaanite woman, "It is not fair to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs" (Mt. 15:26).

The Gentiles did not limit themselves in their diet to clean meats and were thus regarded as detestable. By referring to the Judaizers as dogs, the apostle reverses the charge. These false teachers sneaked in wherever they could, upsetting congregations and unsettling hearts. They taught that unless believers were circumcised according to the law they could not be saved. Thus they predicated hope of life, not upon faith in Jesus, but upon legalistic conformity.

To the apostle such men were predators, rending and tearing the body of Christ. They were unclean in their methods, unfair in their tactics and unscrupulous in their aims. He branded them as the lowest kind of beings, expressing his disgust with their blatant claims that they alone belonged to God because of an external mark, while all others were outside the pale.

The Judaizers were evil-workers. That they were workers no one can question. They were aggressive and assertive, dogging the step of the apostle, seeking to enslave men as rapidly as Paul freed them. Evil is a term applied to any destructive action or teaching. In this case, the infiltrators of Gentile Communities boasted of their righteousness, but it was a form of righteousness which denies the efficacy and need of the death of

Christ.

If man is saved on the basis of his own righteousness by law-keeping, Jesus died in vain. The cross is of no effect. The purpose of God is thwarted. Nothing can be more destructive of peace and trust than to impress upon the necks of God's people the yoke which He removed, and which they were never able to bear. So Paul brands these busy propagandists as workers of evil.

Circumcision, as they advocated it, was simply mutilation. To circumcise means to cut around, and it refers to the cutting off of the circlet of flesh called the foreskin on the external organ of procreation in the male. It betokened that one was a partaker of the covenant made with Abraham, and thus under the law given to the fleshly descendants of Abraham.

But Jesus fulfilled that covenant and took away the law as a means of justification. We are now justified by faith in Him, not by legalistic rites. But to accept circumcision as a term or condition of justification was to reject Christ as its basis. "Now I, Paul, say to you that if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you . . . You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law, you are fallen away from grace" (Gal. 5:2, 4).

It was said of the Judaizers that they did not really respect the law at all, "but they desire to have you circumcised that they may glory in your flesh" (Gal. 6:13). They were scalp-hunters, bragging about the number who had fallen victim to their subtle teaching. They were engaged simply in flesh-cutting and were members of a "mutilation party." They did not lead men into covenant relationship with God. They lured them away from it.

Paul refers to the saints in Christ as the true circumcision. To cut off a little circle of flesh without purging the heart or mind of evil would accomplish nothing spiritually. In his letter to

the Romans, Paul drove a keen distinction which places the whole subject in focus. "For he is not a real Jew who is one outwardly, nor is true circumcision something external or physical. He is a Jew who is one inwardly, and real circumcision is a matter of the heart, spiritual and not literal. His praise is not from men, but from God" (2:28, 29).

Real circumcision is a matter of the heart. What must be cut off from the heart? The answer is supplied in Colossians 2:11, 12. "In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of flesh in the circumcision of Christ; and you were buried with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead." Literal circumcision is cutting something off the body of flesh; spiritual circumcision is cutting off the body of sins, making possible a new creation.

The true seed of Abraham by faith is characterized by worship of God in spirit, as opposed to externals. Worship in spirit is not affected by time or place. It is not conditioned upon ritual or liturgy. It may make use of these means of expression, but never confuses them with worship which is an attitude and attunement of the inner self in harmony with the divine. Hearts filled with the Spirit will seek ways by which to praise and glorify Him who cleansed and purified them as His temple or dwelling place.

Another mark of identification is that the true circumcision finds its glory in Christ. Paul is very free in his usage of the word for glorying or boasting. It is employed thirty-six times in the Scriptures, and all but two (James 1:9; 4:16) are in Paul's letters. To glory in Christ is to trust and rely upon Him wholly and unreservedly as the foundation of all hope. Without Him, life has no meaning. Actually, there is no life, so there can be no glorying.

To put no confidence in the flesh is explained by the

following passages. It embraces circumstances of birth, ethnic origin, parental stock, moral rectitude, ceremonial conformity, ritualistic performance and legalistic exactitude. It must not be confused with bodily tissue, bone and sinew. These are elements that are material. In the sense that the apostle talks about the flesh it is anything outside of Christ Jesus upon which man relies for justification or standing in the presence of God. One must choose whether he will glory in Jesus or something else. Whatever the "something else" may be, it is the flesh.

Paul's Personal Proposal (3:4-11)

Contents

> **Though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If any other man thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law a Pharisee, as to zeal a persecutor of the church, as to righteousness under the law blameless. But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as refuse, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own, based on law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith; that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that if possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.**

If there were any special advantages accruing from the flesh, Paul could have claimed a great many of them. In this respect he would have outshone any of the Judaizers who trusted in such matters. He lists the advantages of which he could have boasted under two heads. Some of them were the result of parentage, others were the personal accomplishments or attainments of his own life. The catalog as given would have been a source of real gratification to any Jew.

The first item which he mentions was circumcision received on the eighth day. It is given priority because this was the very thing the Judaizers sought to bind as essential to salvation. The law specifically required circumcision on the eighth day (Lev. 12:3), and it was in compliance therewith that Jesus was thus circumcised (Luke 2:21). It is probable that some members of "the circumcision party" who were so urgent for others to undergo the rite could not boast of this conformity with the law. Those who embraced Judaism in the Greek world received circumcision in adulthood and could not match the ground of which Paul could have boasted.

The second significant factor is that Paul was of the people of Israel. The term *the people* was used by the Jews to designate only those in covenant relationship with God. Others were called "the nations" but were not regarded as a people. Paul's parents were not of mixed stock. He was directly from the line of the fathers— Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Abraham also fathered the Ishmaelites, and Isaac the Edomites, so to claim fleshly descent from either of these would not necessarily reflect a pure covenantal heritage.

When Jacob was enroute to Canaan upon his return from twenty years of voluntary exile, he wrestled with an angel of God, and because of his tenacity was given the name of Israel, or prince of God (Gen. 32-8). The covenant was confirmed to him and to his seed, and Paul was in the lineage. The implication is that the Judaizers could not all make this claim.

The third alleged advantage is tribal affinity with Benjamin. Many of the workers of evil would not establish relationship to any specific tribe. Those who were proselytes would have no claim to such relationship. The tribe of Benjamin remained attached to that of Judah in the cleavage created by Jeroboam, and after the Babylonian exile returned to help rebuild Jerusalem and restore the law. It was also this tribe which furnished Mordecai and Esther to preserve God's people

from genocide in the plot of Haman (Esther 4:14). In spite of some of the sordid incidents in the history of Benjamin, and there were many such, it was still a tribe to which one could belong with pride.

Paul was a Hebrew born of Hebrews. This might appear to be merely repetitious of previous claims, but it is not. The term Hebrew had to do with language as much as with ancestry. The Jewish people were scattered throughout the world. Every major city had a great concentration of them. Unlike other nationalities, the Jews were not assimilated through intermarriage. They stubbornly refused to be absorbed by Grecian culture which imposed itself upon all others.

However, because of environment and exposure, the posterity of the scattered Jews often began to speak the language of the people among whom they resided. As a result they lost the ability to converse freely in Hebrew. This was not true of Paul. He was ethnically and linguistically pure. His parents were Hebrews and he was a Hebrew.

It is true that Paul was born in Tarsus, an important city in Cilicia. But it is also true that he received his schooling in the academy of Hillel in Jerusalem, where he matriculated under the tutelage of the eminent Gamaliel (Acts 22:3). When he addressed the furious mob from the stairs leading to the military barracks in Jerusalem, he did so in the Hebrew language (Acts 21:40). This all indicated his distinctive Jewishness. Certainly many of his detractors could not make such a claim.

In his attitude toward the law and its interpretation, Paul was a Pharisee. Because of the denunciation of members of this sect by Jesus, we may allow our view of them to be colored with considerable prejudice. In our day we hardly regard Pharisaism as a ground for pride or boasting. But we are not looking at the matter as Jews, nor do we live in the age or clime in which Paul wrote.

The word *Pharisee* means "a separatist," and there was a great deal to be said for the Pharisees in their origin. They began in the period between Malachi and John the Baptist as a protest movement against the infiltration of the Hellenic culture which was causing so many Jews to compromise the ancient faith. The Pharisees refrained from engaging in politics with the Romans and others, and were zealous for the law of God. They accepted the whole law as divinely given and believed that it was to be strictly observed and taught.

In connection with this it must be remembered that the term *Pharisee* was bestowed by their opponents. They had from their origin referred to themselves as Chasidim, the pious (1 Maccabees 2:42; 2 Mace. 4:6). The Pharisees believed in celestial beings and their manifestation. They accepted the concepts of spirits and of a resurrection. In the fierce conflicts which arose between the political and religious sects in Judaism, it is easily seen how one's pride would rejoice in being a Pharisee.

Paul had demonstrated his zeal in action. He thus contrasts his fervency for the law with that of the Judaizers. They were content to proselyte, but Paul actually persecuted those whom he believed to be walking in defiance of the law. This was misdirected zeal, but it was in conformity with Paul's conscience at the time.

Luke described what Paul did. He recognized no privacy and spared neither sex in his vicious attacks. He "laid waste the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison" (Acts 8:3). He vocalized his threats and murderous intentions and secured a permit from the high priest to go to a foreign city and arrest believers in the synagogues and bind them for conveyance to Jerusalem (Acts 9:1, 2). Years later Paul described what he had done to a Jewish mob which had tried to kill him. He told them that he was "zealous for God as you all are this day" (Acts 22:3).

"As to righteousness under the law blameless." In the area of legal rectitude Paul had studied the requirements until he was thoroughly conversant with them, and he had obeyed them with meticulous conformity. A blameless person is one against whom no charge can be made by another and sustained by evidence. As used here it has to do with human judgment rather than divine. None of his contemporaries could successfully charge Paul with infraction of the legalistic demands.

We come now to the great transformation with its complete change of values. "But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ." Paul does not abandon the things which he enumerated because they were evil. They were not sinful and were actually blessings. Zeal is not evil and neither is flawless conduct in harmony with the law. It is the trust in these things as saving virtues, the subtle regarding of them as a savior, which is to be deplored.

When Paul came face to face with Jesus he saw himself in a true light. He was no longer a perfect Jew, but a convicted sinner. The light on the Damascus Road revealed that he was really in darkness. He fell on his face both literally and figuratively. When he saw Jesus in a real light, he saw himself the same way. And what he saw in himself was not good by comparison.

Just as Jesus did not count His previous life in heaven as a thing to which He should cling, but emptied Himself in order to be exalted, so Paul did not count his past life as supremely important and emptied himself. Jesus gave up His life to win men. Men must give up their lives to win Christ. Paul did not simply discount his life a few percentage points. He wrote it off as a total loss. The word *loss* was written across the page of his past life. He was "in the red" in the account book of life.

The ultimate in man's attainment on earth is to know Christ. Paul calls it "the surpassing worth," and the term relates

to the value judgments which man must make. To know Christ, that is, to enter into a vital and life giving relationship with Him, is greater than anything else which gives seeming advantage in this life. All other associations, attainments and attributes fade into nothingness in comparison with this.

In 2 Corinthians 8:9 Paul says, "For your sake, Christ became poor." In Philippians 3:8 he writes, "For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things." Paul went beyond this. He not only regarded his life as a loss, but counted the things which had comprised it as refuse. This last word is from a Greek term which refers to garbage, or more literally, to that which is thrown to the dogs. In ancient cities, dogs roamed the streets and acted as scavengers. Refuse from the table was thrown into the streets and gutters where it was fought over and eaten by dogs.

The same word was often applied to excreta from the body and by some translators is rendered "dung." The significance in the expression is that Paul not only counted the things in which he had trusted as loss, but also something not to be again coveted or desired. One may seek to recoup his losses, but he no longer desires to dabble in that which has been thrown on the garbage dump.

The express purpose of the apostle is found in the term, "in order that I may gain Christ." It is not always true that the price one is willing to pay indicates the value of that which he seeks to gain or secure, but it certainly indicates the value he attaches to it. All the grounds of boasting were freely surrendered to gain Christ.

It was not enough to merely gain Christ, but the apostle wanted to be "found in Him." He wanted to be identified with Christ and share life with Him. It is characteristic of the writings of Paul that he uses the expressions "in Christ" and "in Him" repeatedly. He wanted to be found in Christ, "not having a righteousness of my own, based on the law." Righteousness

based upon law must always be one's own. It depends upon one's own efforts. It is based upon one's own work.

Such righteousness is like being cast into the middle of the ocean. One must fight to keep afloat, yet the very effort wears one down. There is always a tendency to give up because of the futility of the exercise. One feels that he cannot make it, regardless of how hard he tries. Eventually, he will come to the end of his strength and go down, yet he must keep battling as long as possible.

Righteousness based on law means that one must know all things in the law. He must understand all things perfectly. To fail because one did not know or understand is to make one a lawbreaker. One lives by doing. Not to do is to die. In the final analysis, law does not so much tell us what is good, as it tells us what is sin. "For no human being will be justified in his sight by works of the law since through the law comes knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3:20).

"Righteousness under the law" was one of the things which Paul threw to the dogs. In spite of his own outward conformity, he was not proud of it. Whatever gain he had from it he counted as total loss. It was confidence in the flesh, and it was misplaced confidence. "For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh" (Rom. 7:18). Any attempt to attain righteousness by law is doomed from the start. The weakness lies not in the law but in the man. No law can be perfectly kept by an imperfect being. But, if righteousness is by law, the law must be kept perfectly, for life is dependent upon law-keeping. "Cursed be every one who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law and do them." Paul concludes that "all who rely on works of the law are under a curse" (Gal. 3:10).

He had learned that "Now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from law, although the law and the prophets bear witness to it" (Rom. 3:21). To bear witness to a

thing is to testify of it. The law and the prophets testified that God would make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It was not to be according to the one made with their fathers when He led them out of the bondage of Egypt. That was a covenant of law written on stones. It was external. In the new covenant the law or principle of action was to be written on their hearts. They were not to be under a written code.

Habakkuk (2:4) wrote, "The just shall live by his faith." Paul quoted this and applied it to the Good News about Jesus (Rom. 1:17). This was justification "apart from the law." Justification by deeds of law affirms that one will be justified, that is, rendered guiltless by perfect keeping of the law. Justification apart from law, declares that one is counted righteous because of faith in Jesus. Thus, the conclusion of Romans 3:21 defines righteousness apart from law as "the righteousness of God," and declares it is "through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe."

Paul tells the Philippians that there is a righteousness of one's own. It is based upon law. But it is contrasted with the righteousness from God. In the first, one seeks to earn justification, or guiltlessness. If he achieves righteousness, it is his own, because he earned it. But "righteousness from God" cannot be earned. It is always undeserved. It does not come from faith in one's own power or ability to deliver the goods. It is not the result of prowess or performance. It is "through faith in Christ."

A right relationship with God is not the result of human effort. It is not a reward for unremitting toil. It is not given because of keeping your nose to the grindstone. It is freely given of God to those who have no righteousness of their own, and must trust in Jesus absolutely, fully, completely. It is thus Paul wanted to "be found in Him." And we can rejoice that he thus wrote to the saints in Philippi, with their bishops and deacons.

They were beset by Judaizing teachers who sought to involve them in the law and with circumcision. What a blessing to be lifted completely out of the whole problem of law-keeping as a means of obtaining righteousness with God. What freedom from fear, what liberty of conscience we receive!

Paul had suffered the loss of all things and counted them as refuse in order that he might gain Christ, and be found in Him. One reason was "that I may know him and the power of his resurrection." The original word for "know" was not limited to the accumulation of facts, or the development of a philosophy, or the acquisition of principles. It did not refer to what is sometimes called "head knowledge." It would have been fairly easy for Paul to know about Jesus, but this is not what he meant.

The word *know* **means to experience. It has to do with an intimate relationship. Indeed, in the old covenant Scriptures it is employed to designate the sexual relationship. "And Adam** *knew* **Eve and she conceived and bore a son." We still use the term "carnal knowledge" in legal phraseology for sexual intercourse. Paul wanted to become one spirit with Jesus (1 Cor. 6:17), as a man becomes one flesh with a woman.**

To the apostle, the resurrection was more than an event. It was a historical fact and it proved that Jesus was the Son of God (Rom. 1:4). But it went far beyond that in its effect. It validated preaching and made faith genuine. It made forgiveness of sins possible, and gave assurance that those who died in Christ have not perished. Such is the remarkable argument made in 1 Corinthians 15:13-19.

The resurrection of Jesus has great implications in the past, present and future. In the past, it provides a basis for our faith. If it were not for the resurrection we would simply be honoring a dead hero. The claim of divine Sonship would be empty and vacuous. In the present, the resurrection is the source of our strength and effort. It gives impetus and motivation to

life. We know that we shall see Him so we walk in newness of life.

But it is the hope for the future which is aroused by the resurrection which makes life here worthwhile. The grave is not the end. It is temporary, not permanent. The power which rolled away the stone will remove the marble and granite slabs above us. The voice which spoke to Lazarus will echo through the vaults of the earth and rouse the sleeping dead. To experience the power of the resurrection is to share in the most awesome demonstration in the history of mankind. Paul considered it of greater value than all of his past. Every human attainment paled into insignificance when compared with it.

"And may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death." It is amazing how much time, money and effort go into the relief of physical suffering. A prodigious amount is spent each year on what are called "pain relievers." Pharmaceutical companies make millions from drugs designed to stop aches. The advertising companies make millions in advertising them. It seems incongruous to modern man that anyone would want to participate in acute human suffering. Yet, this was an ambition of Paul.

He held that life in Christ was a constant sharing. "As we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ, we share abundantly in comfort too" (2 Cor. 1:5). "It is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him" (Rom. 8:16, 17).

In the sentence immediately following, Paul writes, "I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us." When one reads the list of his sufferings it seems incredible that he should appear almost contemptuous of them. It also demonstrates how

great the glory would be. To the Colossians he wrote, "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I complete what remains of Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, that is, the church." Whatever Jesus would suffer for the sake of His body, Paul was willing to suffer in his body.

"If possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead." The apostle believed in a universal and general resurrection. He had a hope in God "that there will be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust" (Acts 24:15). It may be that he regarded the resurrection of a martyr, one who had died for the Lord, as of special glory and honor. If so, he coveted death as a means of glorification when those who slept were called forth.

Toward the Goal (3:12-16)

Contents

> **Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brethren, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining toward what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those of us who are mature be thus minded; and if in anything you are otherwise minded, God will reveal that also to you. Only let us hold true to what we have attained.**

At this juncture Paul introduces a subject with which those in the Greek world were quite familiar, the striving in the games, especially in the foot races. Athletic contests occupied an important place in the social life of the people. There were four chief games to which they came from all parts of the Roman Empire. They were the Olympic, the Isthmian, the Pythian and the Nemean. The first of these was the most important. The Olympics were held every four years in the plain of Elis in honor of Zeus.

In addition to these, other cities and villages staged annual contests. Archaeologists have discovered and excavated stadia, and uncovered the actual tracks. The one at Athens was one-eighth of an old Roman mile. The one at Ephesus was longer. The runners ran to the end of the course and back to the starting point. In some cases there are stone blocks at the starting place

with depressions for the heels of the runners, to give them a springing start when the cord stretched before them was dropped.

The winner in one of the great games was awarded special honors. He was crowned with a chaplet of leaves. At the Olympics it was made of wild olives, at Corinth of pine. It was the most coveted recognition in the land. The winner was given a triumphal entry through the gates of the city. That city was accorded great respect. The family of the winner enjoyed tax-free status for the year. Its members were acclaimed when they appeared in public.

In our day we have a national organization of "Athletes for Christ." Its members have gained renown in various branches of athletic endeavor. They are using their own recognition to bring honor to Jesus. In their appearances at banquets and before gatherings of young people they witness to their faith in Christ. But in Paul's day he regarded the entire Community of saints as composed of athletes. He thought of them as in a spiritual arena, with tiers of seats filled with pagans looking down upon them.

To the apostle the very Christian life was a racecourse. The finish line was death. The ultimate award was resurrection with its never-fading crown of life. He knew he had not "already obtained this." He did not consider himself "already perfect." The word rendered perfect is an interesting one. It is *teleios.* **It does not refer to abstract or sinless perfection.** *Telos* **is the word for end, so the form of the word here used refers to reaching the end for which a thing is intended. It has to do with adequacy rather than with character.**

Paul was not yet claiming the victor's crown. He had not obtained the degree of suffering for which he strove, and had not completed the agonizing which would make him share in the glorious resurrection awaiting the martyr who placed his life on the line for Jesus. However, he was pressing on, a phrase which

comes from a word meaning to pursue. Paul had not relaxed. He was speeding on earnestly. His own aim was to grasp for his own the realization of the dream which Jesus had for him when He appeared to him on the road to Damascus.

The apostle had never forgotten that occasion. Now, in a Roman prison, after having run the race for many years, his mind reverts to the time when he was a persecutor of the believers and Jesus revealed Himself to him. He remembered the words, "Rise and enter the city and you will be told what to do." He recalled how, when he rose from the ground and opened his eyes, he could see nothing. He had to be led by the hand and be brought to the house of Judas, on Straight Street.

The memory of the visit of Ananias returned. He knew that Ananias had been summoned by the Lord to meet him and tell him what to do. Ananias came after Paul had spent three sightless days praying, without food and drink. Ananias had not wanted to come to him, but the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; for I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name" (Acts 9:16).

Like a runner in the stadium, between the white lines which marked his course, Paul was straining and pressing forward. Jesus had chalked the route which was his, and called him to enter it, and was even now waiting for him at the end of his race. There could be no stopping, no resting, no hesitancy. Even in prison the suffering was still going on. Jesus had made Paul His own to suffer for His sake. He must continue until he departed to be with the Lord.

"Brethren, I do not consider that I have made it my own." This is not a mere reassertion of a previous testimony about his lack of attainment. The use of the endearing term of address shows the affection with which he regarded those to whom he was writing, and the importance he attached to what he wanted

to tell them. It must not be forgotten that he is writing here in contravention of "the dogs, the evil workers, and those who are flesh mutilators" (verse 2). These were advocates of circumcision as the crowning glory. Their confidence was in the flesh. To them, the only suffering needed was the temporary pain involved in cutting off the circlet of flesh.

Paul speaks of them as "mutilating the flesh," but they thought of themselves as having arrived. They were not in a race. They were not straining and sweating in the arena. To be cast into prison and endure suffering for the faith appeared ridiculous to them. As Paul thought of them and their possible influence upon the community, he could not resist writing that those are the true circumcision who worship God in spirit and glory in Christ Jesus. He discounted the very things in which they took pride. He regarded these as actually having hindered him until he discarded them.

Sitting in the Roman prison he was free. Those who were outside and trying to persuade those in Christ to be circumcised were enslaved. They were in slavery to legalism, they were bound by the fetters of fleshly forms. Unlike them, Paul did not put his trust in righteousness of law, and though he had been circumcised on the eighth day he did not feel that he had claimed for his own that for which Christ had chosen or claimed him.

Paul speaks of his consecration and concentration. "This one thing I do." All of us are aware of the distractions which life brings to bear upon us. But the athlete cannot afford to think of other things. Of all the persons in the world of his day who could have been bothered by other things it would seem that Paul would have been in the first row. The great lesson to be learned is that he fitted every experience in life into the race. His motto was "what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel" (1:12).

It was Paul who also wrote, "We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose" (Rom. 8:28). Our task is not to rebel against things, but to allow God to fit them into the purpose for which He has called us. We are under the umbrella of His love regardless what happens. If we recognize His work in everything we will not be diverted from our purpose by anything. Everything will contribute unto the one thing which advances us toward the goal.

"Forgetting what lies behind." This does not mean that Paul's mind went blank as to his past. He recalled that he "formerly blasphemed and persecuted and insulted Christ," and he also remembered that he received mercy because he had acted ignorantly in unbelief (1 Tim. 1:13). But he did not run looking back over his shoulder. He had learned the great lesson of life, as expressed by our pioneers that "you cannot grind any grist with water which has already gone over the dam."

Vain remorse for the sins and failures of the past will make it impossible for us to enjoy the present, and will doom us to a bleak future. We need to recognize the tremendous potential of God's grace manifested in His forgiveness, and to trust in His promises. Then we can face the future unhampered by problems which intrude upon his attention. It is for this reason the writer of the letter to the Hebrews says, "Let us also lay aside every weight . . . and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us" (Heb. 12:1).

"Straining forward to what lies ahead." The picture is one of an athlete with every muscle taut, body bent forward, taking in great gasps of air, legs churning, as he drives forward. The contrast between this and the Christian life as generally evidenced in our day is great. It calls for a personal re-examination of our lives to determine if we really conceive of them as an agonizing and gruelling contest for a crown, or merely an alternative way of life. It is obvious that few of us ever

become exhausted from the rigorous discipline of life in Christ.

"I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." Once more, Paul speaks of pressing on, which, in the original, is from a term referring to pursuit. It did not relate to useless running. There was an object to be overtaken, a point to be reached. The goal was always in view. Every effort must be made to reach it. Only at the goal was the prize awarded.

The reaching of the goal required human endeavor. One pressed toward it in spite of aching limbs and shortened breath. But the prize was from the hand of Jesus. In the Olympic races, the tired runner was summoned from the arena where he had valiantly struggled to the judges' dais. Amidst the shout from the populace a crown of leaves was pressed down upon his head. In some instances a purse containing a sum of money was given into his hand. This was the prize for which he had striven toward the goal.

No fleshly example or metaphor is ever adequate to portray fully that which is spiritual. This one is no exception. In the physical race all of the emoluments lie at the conclusion of the running. It is not so in the spiritual realm. The prize is related to "the upward call of God." That call comes to the apostle while he was still a persecutor of God's people. He was confronted by Jesus on the Damascus Road and called to a life of arduous service. The word *klesis,* here rendered calling, is always used in the new covenant scriptures of a heavenly calling. The idea of an invitation seems always implied. In 2 Timothy 1:9 it is referred to as "a holy calling," and in Hebrews 3:1 as a "heavenly calling." The prize was the final blessing of the high or honorable calling.

"Let those of us who are mature be thus minded." The word "us" is an appropriate one. Paul uses good psychology in including the Philippian saints as well as himself in being

mature. Again there is a contrast with Judaizing teachers. They are still in the childhood age represented by law and circumcision. They have not matured to the place where they can grasp the great truth that "Christ is the end of the law, that every one who has faith may be justified" (Rom. 10:4).

Those who have grown up in their thinking to the place where they are no longer trusting in righteousness of their own based on law, should no more return to that than a grown man should return to his childhood thoughts and actions. He has outgrown his childish attitudes and is mature enough to press toward the goal. He is not a toddler but a runner. As full-grown he can fulfill God's purpose in his life.

"If in anything you are otherwise minded, God will reveal that also to you." It is those who are mature who will receive and appreciate God's revelation. The immature and frivolous are not capable of grasping deep truths. But as one matures he does not at once grasp every fact or truth. Maturity is as much an attitude as an attainment. If the saints resolve to adhere to the rule as given, and there are minor points they have not yet seen, God will allow them to gain insights which will complete the range of knowledge. We do not stop growing in knowledge when we reach maturity. If we do, we lapse into immaturity again!

"Only let us hold true to what we have attained." All truth is true, and we must hold it as such. It is the foundation upon which we must build for the future. We must never relinquish the truth we have, because we do not have all the truth. The acquisition of additional truth depends upon our attitude toward that to which we have attained. Knowledge is not dumped upon us in a great heavenly outburst. We must study, think, ponder and meditate, and we come to a gradual absorption of the facts of God's purpose for our lives. It is not necessary that we know all to be true, but it is necessary that we be true to all we know!

Perhaps the greatest exercise in which we could engage for

the present and future would be to sit down and evaluate our feeling toward what we have attained. It is possible we are not employing it for the design of God. Knowledge unused is debased; knowledge misused may be dangerous. We cannot be true to our gifts by "wrapping them in a napkin and hiding them." We cannot be true to their Giver by being untrue to His gifts.

The Colony of Heaven (3:17-21)

Contents

> **Brethren, join in imitating me, and mark those who so live as you have example in us. For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, live as enemies of the cross of Christ, their end is destruction, their god is the belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. But our commonwealth is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power which enables him even to subject all things to himself.**

"Brethren, join in imitating me." It is difficult for us to constantly bear in mind that this was a letter written with difficulty by a man in prison. In the eyes of the world he was a loser. He has just finished reminding his readers that he divested himself of all the trappings of which men generally boast. He craved to share in the sufferings of Jesus. He did not regard himself as perfect. Yet he urges the brethren to imitate him.

The original of the word has been transliterated into our English term mimic. A mimic is an actor who portrays another. He seeks to copy or imitate the life and mannerisms of another with such fidelity that one can feel he is in the presence of the original. The apostle wanted the brethren not only to imitate him, but to mark others who did so. The word for mark is *skopeo,* **to look at, to observe, contemplate or watch. We use the expressions "keep an eye on," or "keep an eye out for." By**

watching others who use the apostle as an example we can better imitate his life ourselves.

It is interesting to note that the apostle declares that "many live as enemies of the cross of Christ." He declared that he had often told them of this. Perhaps upon the occasion of his visits among them he had warned them publicly and privately about those whom he deemed unworthy of trust. It is possible he referred to false teachers who wormed their way into the community to teach that justification was not really by faith, but by deeds of law. Such men were enemies of the cross because they substituted something else for it. They may have been "missionaries," traveling about, taking advantage of the hospitality of the saints to teach obedience to the law and circumcision.

Paul told about such men "even with tears." Although this letter has been called one of rejoicing, it still records Paul weeping as he wrote. Rejoicing in the Lord does not preclude tears. In Ephesus he declared, "that for three years I did not cease day or night to admonish every one with tears" (Acts 20:31). To the Corinthians he said, "For I wrote you out of much affliction and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to cause you pain but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you" (2 Cor. 2:4). Tears are not a sign of weakness. They are overt demonstration of the strength of an inner compassion.

The end of the enemies of the cross is destruction. The preaching of the cross is foolishness to them that perish (1 Cor. 1:18). Those who do not know God and do not obey His gospel "shall suffer the punishment of everlasting destruction and exclusion from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his might" (2 Thess. 1:9). The preaching of the cross is a fragrance from death to death, and from life to life, to those who are perishing and to those who are being saved (2 Cor. 2:15, 16). The cross falls heavily upon those who deny it.

"Their god is their belly." They worship their own desires, appetites and lusts. They walk after the flesh. They engage in gluttony. It is apparent that the love feasts were infiltrated by selfish profligates. Jude says, "they are blemishes on your love feasts, as they boldly carouse together, looking after themselves" (verse 12). Peter calls them unsteady souls and accursed children. He brands the way they partook of the love feasts as dissipation (2 Pet. 2:13). Such men must have been a source of embarrassment to the communities in an alien world. The apostle declared that "they count it pleasure to revel in the daytime." They were open and brazen about their actions.

"They glory in their shame." One can tell a great deal about others by determining that in which they take pride. To glory in that which should be a source of shame is indicative of a warped sense of values. Jude speaks of them as "grumblers, malcontents, following their own passions, loud-mouthed boasters, flattering people to gain advantage." He declares that they are "scoffers, following their own ungodly passions," and that "It is these which set up divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit."

In our days of more orderly behavior and conduct it seems a little incredible that the communities of the reconciled should have been disturbed by those described as "wild waves of the sea, casting up the foam of their own shame." It is sad to see men guilty of shameful behavior, but it is worse to see them proud of the very things which are shameful. Surely their conduct denies the power of the cross which was to transform character.

"With minds set on earthly things." It is the mind-set which determines our life style. Carnal minds result in carnal actions. The apostle exhorts the Colossians to "put to death what is earthly in you." He defines what he includes in the term as "immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry." He declares they once walked in these when they lived in them. He urges them to put them all away.

As a contrast to those whose minds are disposed toward earthly things the apostle writes, "But our commonwealth is in heaven." This is the Revised Standard Version rendering of *politeuma,* **which has to do with the life of a citizen. Our English word "politics" is related to it. The Authorized Version has** *conversation,* **which had to do with the manner of life when the translation was printed in 1611. It served as a contrast with the behavior of those who mind earthly things. The word "conversation" has taken on a different meaning in our day and is too limited to express what is meant by** *politeuma.*

The word *commonwealth* **refers to an organized body of people living in a community, and may approximate what is meant here. The Twentieth Century New Testament uses the word "Empire." The Concordant Literal New Testament has "our realm." J.B. Phillips has "citizens of heaven." Charles Kingsley Williams translates it "our common life." Weymouth uses "free citizens of heaven." The Authentic Version has "our form of government."**

I have quoted all of these so that you might recognize the difficulty encountered in the attempt to find a modern equivalent for the word *politeuma***. After weighing them all and considering their merits, I accept that of Moffatt in his version as the most appropriate. He renders it, "For you are a colony of heaven." To the Christians in a Roman colony this would convey a special significance. Just as Philippi was a colony planted by the emperor in a distant capital, whom many of the citizens had never seen, so the community of the redeemed was a colony planted by a King from the New Jerusalem which those upon the earth had never seen.**

Roman colonies were visible evidence of the power of Rome as a world conqueror. They were established to help maintain the *Pax Romana,* **the peace of Rome, which was to be universal. Wherever such a colony existed, it maintained its ties with Rome through regular channels of communication. Its**

petitions were addressed to the emperor. Its allegiance was to him. The citizens of such a colony dressed like Romans, acted like Romans, and used the speech of Romans. Their values were not those of the people who surrounded them, for they regarded themselves as in an alien world.

What a powerful upsurge of emotion comes when we regard a community of those who have been called as "a colony of heaven." Such a community exists to further the interests of a peace that passes understanding. Its citizens do not belong to the world. They dress, act and speak as those who have been redeemed from the world. The community of saints is to be a little heaven, as a Roman colony was to be a little Rome. By looking at a colony of heaven one should be able to see in a faint way what heaven will be like. He should derive from it a foretaste of the glory that will be revealed.

"From it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ." The greatest event in the life of the Roman colony was a visit from the emperor. Children were taught to live for such a day. They were instructed to do nothing of which they might be ashamed when they faced the emperor. The announcement of an impending visit spurred a frenzy of preparation. Houses were whitewashed. Streets were cleaned of all debris. Sometimes the calendar was changed and the future was dated for the royal visit. Coins were struck with the face of the emperor upon them. Hadrian's travels can be followed by the commemorative coins which marked his progress. It was as if a whole new set of values began with the advent of the king.

The communities of heaven are to be in joyous expectation of the coming of their King to "review the troops." Just as ancient kings marked their coming by setting prisoners free and by bestowing gifts upon the faithful who were permitted to sit down with them on the platform, so our Lord will grant a crown to those who have overcome. We should teach our children and our children's children to look forward to the coming of the

King. It will provide the end for which all of life was intended. It will be the capsheaf event of the new creation. Now we come to Christ; then He will come to us!

"Who will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body." Literally, the term "our lowly body" could be read as "the body of our humiliation." It is used in a good sense. The apostle had a high regard for the body which was the dwelling place of the spirit, the real man, and was also the temple of the Holy Spirit. The body is subject to pain and decay. It can be bruised and battered. It is appointed unto death and decomposition.

But it will be changed and all of the physical characteristics will pass away and we will be like Him. Our altered body will be spiritual, powerful and magnified. We shall see Him as He is. We will become like Him. This is the glorious promise which awaits us. It is our hope. And it will be accomplished "by the power which enables him even to subject all things to himself." He is Lord of all. He is Master of everything. His power knows no end. It is appointed unto death and decomposition.

Help These Women (4:1-3)

Contents

> **Therefore, my brethren, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved. I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord. And I ask you also, true yokefellow, help these women, for they labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.**

Much of the work of dividing the Bible into chapters was done by Cardinal Hugo de Sancto-Caro. It is said this work was finished about 1236. Obviously the cardinal did not have an English Bible with which to work. While we can be grateful for his having undertaken such a momentous task, we can only be somewhat critical of the finished product. A good case in point is the one before us. It would appear that logically it is the conclusion of the subject-matter of the previous chapter. The introductory word "therefore" seems to indicate this.

Regardless of where the verse belongs the meaning is not altered. It is a clear demonstration of the deep affection of the apostle for the community at Philippi. The usage of the address "my brethren" speaks of a relationship that is tender and deep. It almost seems that he goes out of his way to use the word brethren. In 2:12 he speaks of them as "my beloved" and in 3:1 again addressed them as "my brethren." The attitude exhibited by such terms of endearment should characterize everyone who is associated with a community of the reconciled ones.

"Whom I love and long for." How touching is this language when we remember that it was written from prison. Prison life can be endured only by identification through memory with those one has known before. Bars cannot wall out love. Locks are powerless to restrict it. The apostle had already written that "It is right for me to feel thus about you all, because I hold you all in my heart as partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel" (1:7). He wanted to send Timothy so that, as he wrote, "I may be cheered by news of you."

Longing is always the result of desire. Here it refers to an intensified or strengthened form of desire. As the apostle penned these words which we read, while chained to a prison guard, his mind must have reverted to the days when he first came to Philippi and was released from the local jail, and visited Lydia, "and when they had seen the brethren they exhorted them and departed" (Acts 16:40). Even now he was dreaming of coming to them again (1:26).

"My joy and crown." Joy is abundant gladness. It is sheer delight. It is a state which affects the whole being. Here it is used by metonymy to indicate the occasion or cause. The life and thoughtfulness of the community at Philippi was the source of feeling which bubbled and boiled up within the apostle. This is truly a "joy letter." The words "joy" and "rejoicing" occur in at least sixteen places. They are found in every chapter. It is good to know that people were Paul's joy.

There are two words in the Greek rendered by "crown." One was *diadema,* **a kingly crown. Every crown is a symbol, and this one was bestowed as an emblem of regal or imperial dignity. The other word is** *stephanos.* **It was generally woven of ivy, parsley, myrtle or olive. It was the crown of victory placed upon the head of the winner of a race or contest. It was a visible manifestation of honor bestowed by kings on their visits to provinces or colonies.**

It is *stephanos* which Paul uses here. The brethren were interlaced with one another to form a crown of victory. Those who composed the colony of heaven represented a triumph over the pagan realm about them. The crown of the apostle was made up of persons. It was living. So that victory would not be turned into defeat, the apostle exhorts the saints to stand fast in the Lord. Faith was needed until the end of the race. There could be no faltering on the course.

It was at this juncture the apostle had to insert a special note to two women. Apparently a disagreement had risen between them. It was of such intensity that Paul felt obligated to notice it. All that we know of the principals is found in this brief mention. We can be reasonably sure they were identified with the community at Philippi and had been fellow-workers with Paul and others. Something had happened to disturb their mutual relationship and it affected the colony of heaven. Paul wrote to them as sisters. They did not need to agree to be in the Lord, but because they were in the Lord, they should seek to agree.

Euodia, whose name means "fragrance," and Syntyche, whose name means "fortunate" will be remembered in all ages only because they quarreled. Paul demonstrates his concern by urging them to settle their problem. He did not reveal to us what it was, but his handling of it provides a guideline for dealing with such a situation. He did not assess guilt or take sides. He did not lump them off together. He made a personal entreaty to each. "I entreat Euodia, and entreat Syntyche." There was no hint of favoritism shown.

One can only wonder what happened in the community at Philippi when this letter was read. Did the two women resent it? Did they burst into tears and embrace one another while the rest of the disciples wept? It would seem incredible that this warm entreaty of a lonely man in a far-off prison could have gone by unnoticed. Paul did not stop with merely writing a note to the

women.

"And I ask you also, true yokefellow, help these women." It has always been a matter of speculation as to whom Paul addressed as his "true yokefellow." Some have conjectured that he used a proper name, *Syzygus,* which means one who works well beside another, one who pulls his share of the load in a harness made for two. Was the letter delivered to a faithful co-worker of the apostle, and read by him to the assembled community?

We can be sure that whoever was intended he could be trusted. He was true and genuine. The apostle had confidence in his ability to alleviate a trying situation and to mediate in a case of sufficient concern as to merit mention in a letter to the community. Was the true yokefellow one of the elders? Was he one of the deacons? We do not know. It is certain he was a man of tact, feeling and interest, or he would not have been exhorted to "help these women."

"They have labored side by side with me in the gospel." This one statement seems to remove Paul from the charge of certain moderns that he was a male chauvinist. The idea seems to have developed among those who do not respect the Word as of divine origin that Paul, who was unmarried, wrote his personal prejudices against women into the text. It is charged that the one body has been influenced to make women second-class citizens of the kingdom because of this. In reality, I suspect that we have read some of the accumulated prejudice of the ages back into what Paul wrote.

Much probably remains to be done in uncovering the attitude of the primitive saints toward the work of women. Such research may reveal that some of the prohibitions of our day were not a part of the early communities of the faith. It is evident that in many respects the concern for the oppressed, the widows and orphans, and the actual ministering to them by

women in the Lord was so outstanding as to gain the applause of the pagans. The famous rhetorician, Libanus, tutor of John Chrysostom was credited with the statement, "Bless me! What women these Christians have!"

In the absence of additional testimony we may never be able to pinpoint the actual labors of Euodia and Syntyche, and other faithful women. Our conclusions must be rendered upon the basis of all the scriptures teach, together with declarations of the history of the period. From the passage before us we know that these women labored with the apostle; that it was intimate and close, and that it was in the gospel. The unity and accord indicated by the term "side by side" had now been lost by the two women, and it must be restored.

How did these women labor "in the gospel"? It would seem, from other scriptures bearing upon their work, that they were not sent forth as evangelists, or public proclaimers of the Good News. Perhaps they served as "deaconesses," charged with instruction of the other women, and their preparation for baptism. The free and easy access between the sexes was not then possible. The apostles could not enter the "women's quarters" in the home. There was no such thing as visitation of women in private by men. Phoebe was a deaconess of the community at Cenchreae, who had been a helper of many and of Paul as well (Rom. 16:1, 2). Timothy was provided qualifications for those to be admitted to the "widow ministry," supported by the saints (1 Tim. 5:9-16).

"Together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers." This portrays a closely-knit group of brothers and sisters, the unity of which would be broken up by a quarrel. We cannot identify Clement. It is fanciful conjecture that he was Clement of Rome. The name was a popular one which meant "merciful."

"Whose names are in the book of life." The book of life is

the record of all those who will share in the fulness of eternal life. It contains the names of those who have not adopted other gods (Ex. 32:31-33). It contains the names of the overcomers (Rev. 3:5). It contains the names of the worthy (Rev. 20:15). It contains the names of those who are undefiled, who do not work abomination, and who do not lie (Rev. 21:27). It is important to have one's name in many books on earth, but it is imperative that it be in the book of life.

The Peace of God (4:4-7)

Contents

> **Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, Rejoice. Let all men know your forbearance. The Lord is at hand. Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.**

"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, Rejoice." Great things have been written in prison. John Bunyan wrote "The Pilgrim's Progress" while in the Bedford jail. It has passed through more translations and circulated more copies than any other work except the Bible. In March 1555, Rawlins White, sentenced to die at the stake for preaching the Word, wrote from the jail in Cardiff, Wales, these words: "I, with all my heart and mind, give unto God most hearty thanks, that he hath made me worthy to abide all this, for his holy name's sake."

But to me the words of Paul seem the most appropriate. Rejoicing is exultation and happiness expressed. To be free enough in spirit to encourage his friends to rejoice even while he was in chains reaches the highest peak of the divine-human relationship. To send out words of jubilation from his cell is an encouragement to every one who is persecuted for the sake of Jesus.

"Let all men know your forbearance." The word rendered

forbearance presents a real challenge to an English linguist. It is *epieikes.* There is no single word in our language which captures its full implication. Perhaps the word big-heartedness comes nearest to doing so. Translators have used such words as leniency, generosity, geniality and considerateness. It embraces all of these, but they do not wholly encompass the meaning.

Aristotle declared that it referred to justice, but sometimes surpassed it. He explained by saying it recognized the law, but also realized that all laws were sometimes deficient because they were general. Perhaps, as someone has pointed out, the term "sweet reasonableness" is as near as we can come. Such an attitude should be recognized by all. It is not to be kept "bottled up," but the fragrance should be spilled upon all men. It is a social need, a public value.

"The Lord is at hand." This is subject to several interpretations. We dare not be dogmatic about any of them. In the absence of clear-cut explanation by the apostle we should not impose our own as the final word. Opinions are private deductions, not public dogmas. It would seem a little doubtful, in view of what Paul wrote in 2 Thessalonians 2:1, 2 that he meant to imply the imminent return of Jesus.

The statement could mean that Jesus was near, beholding their conduct and attitudes. It could mean that death which brings us into a deep relationship with Him is but a breath away. Of course, the apostle could be urging the second coming of Christ as a reason why we should consistently serve Him and one another in love. He could do this without setting a day. The Philippians no doubt knew how to apply the statement, and were comforted by it.

"Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." Jesus taught that worry is a sin. In a notable passage, recorded in Matthew 6:25-34, He shows that

worry about what we shall eat, drink, or wear is a demonstration of lack of faith. It mistakes values. Life is more than food. The body is more than clothing. It discounts God's care for nature. He feeds the birds. He clothes the flowers. Anxiety puts us in the category of the pagans. It borrows concern about tomorrow rather than meeting the needs of the day.

Anxiety accomplishes nothing of a positive nature. It only creates a state in which one can hardly act upon the forces which beset and surround him. Prayer is an active approach to our problems. It places things in the hands of Him who can handle them. Supplication generally refers to asking in behalf of one's own needs. Intercession refers to asking in behalf of another. However, the latter term in the covenant scriptures carries with it the idea of making a request or presenting an entreaty to a superior personage.

The original for thanksgiving is *eucharistia.* **It has been transliterated into English as eucharist. It will be seen to be built around** *charis,* **undeserved kindness. The prefix** *eu* **means well, or good. Thanksgiving is the freely given expression of gratitude for blessings received. Cicero, who had much to say about gratitude, called it "the mother of all virtues, and the capital of all deities." Jeremy Taylor declared that "Every furrow in the Book of Psalms is sown with the seeds of thanksgiving."**

Among the ancients, gratitude was both the most deified and the most practically neglected of all human qualities. It was easier to serve with the lips than to share with the heart. Paul not only enjoined it, but exemplified it. He began his letter with thankfulness (1:3-5), and ended it with a burst of gratitude for the gifts the saints had sent (4:18). If we are thankful to men for the grace of their gifts, surely we need to be thankful to the Father for the gifts of His grace.

"Let your requests be made known to God." Men of

prayer can only offer the prayers of men, but the requests of men become the bequests of God. To refer a request to God reduces it to reality. Men can only ask, but only God can answer. One is shortsighted who seeks solace solely in his own heart, when the bountiful bestower of blessings beckons him to beseech Him for comfort. Prayers, supplications, thanksgiving and requests. All of these are human approaches to the divine. The recognizing of need produces the need to recognize that God is ready to reward.

"And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Four things are here affirmed of true peace— its origin, nature, function and sphere of influence. No one can know the peace of God who does not know the God of peace (Heb. 13:20). The word for peace, *eirene,* **occurs in every book of the new covenant scriptures except 1 John. It signifies harmonious relationship. It is achieved with God through justification by faith in the Lord Jesus (Rom. 5:1).**

Such peace passes all understanding. The word in the original is *nous.* **It is the word for mind, the seat of reflective consciousness. The mind is the organ of perception. The peace of God is not the result of human rationalization. It was not conceived or devised by the human thinking process. It is unfathomable in its dimensions, undiscoverable by logic, and unattainable by mere study. Peace is the gift of God made possible by reconciling grace.**

That peace will keep our hearts and minds. To keep implies to watch over, to guard or preserve. Nothing else can equal the peace of God in providing inner calm or restfulness. To know that one has been forgiven and cleansed is a source of great satisfaction. Cicero describes peace as "liberty in tranquillity." Max Lerner wrote in *The Gifts of the Magi,* **"You may call for peace as loudly as you wish, but where there is no brotherhood there can be no peace."**

Things to Think About (4:8, 9)

Contents

> **Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, do; and the God of peace will be with you.**

The letter of love is drawing to a close, but the apostle would not conclude without an exhortation. Knowing that what one thinks will determine what he becomes, he is anxious to provide categories of thought which will edify. He specifies six areas in which thought should be concentrated.

"Whatever is true." The term whatever is all-embracing. The word true in the original carries the idea of that which is open, plain, and unconcealed. Ancient sculptors covered their statues of Mercy, Justice, etc., but Truth was always left naked. It is the opposite of sham, falsehood and hypocrisy. Truth has nothing to hide. It is revelation rather than mystery. To the Greek mind it was the reality behind all that we can see. It was the genuine. It was the essence.

"Whatever is honorable." This is the word rendered "grave" in some places. At first, it signified that which was revered, or venerated, that is, accorded deserved respect and honor. Archbishop Trench, in his book on synonyms, points out that to do full justice to it, there must be dignity coupled with

gravity. The disciple must be both serious and above reproach in speech and behavior. He dare not spend his time with the frivolous and inconsequential.

"Whatever is just." Justice is the agreement of one's acts with his profession. It was, among the Greeks, the according to the gods and to one's fellows what was due them. It is obvious that in the social stream others have rights as well as ourselves. One cannot be just and selfish. He cannot interpose his demands to the exclusion of others. Neighbors, friends, relatives, and brethren have a right to fair treatment from us. They are deserving and we must provide for them in respect and love.

"Whatever is pure." The original refers to that which is not contaminated. Just as food and drink may be mixed with poison, or become defiled by introduction of a foreign element, so ideas may also become impure. As the eating of food which has had a dangerous substance introduced may result in death, so the spiritual man can also suffer from digesting those thoughts which have become defiled.

"Whatever is lovely." This is the only occurrence of the word in the new covenant scriptures. In some versions it is rendered by attractive. William Barclay said that winsome is the best translation of all. It is that special quality which causes the pure and wholesome to be attracted.

"Whatever is gracious." The original is difficult to translate. It is *euphemos,* which is carried into our language by euphemism. The word literally means "good speaking." Barclay renders it fair-spoken. The King James Version has "of good report." It is evident it means that which is appealing to one who is chaste. Perhaps it conveys the idea of something fit for God to hear.

"If there is any excellence." Paul here uses a word highly esteemed in pagan thought. It appears over and over in classical

literature, yet this is the only time the apostle uses it. It could apply to anything which was deemed to be of outstanding quality or which was noteworthy in its field. It is possible that Paul was summoning his readers to think of their highest aspirations for good in their former lives and contrast them with his message of divine love.

"If there is anything worthy of praise." Nothing is eliminated that is virtuous or praiseworthy. The child of God is to cover the whole spectrum in his mental processes. If all of us would heed this admonition and limit our thinking to the various things here mentioned, we could immediately uplift humanity.

Paul reminds the Philippians of what they had learned, received, heard and seen in him. These they were to do. They had been instructed by him. He had conveyed to them the revelation of God which they had received. Not only had they heard from his lips what they should do, but he had practiced it among them. They had his example as well as his verbal tutelage. In verse 7 he speaks of the peace of God. In verse 9 he speaks of the God of peace. The latter will be with them. The former will be in them. The admonition to think properly begins and ends with peace.

Learning the Secret (4:10-13)

Contents

> **I rejoice in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me; you were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity. Not that I complain of want; for I have learned, in whatever state I am, to be content. I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound; in any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and want. I can do all things in him who strengthens me.**

"I rejoice in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me." Someone has called this section an example of Christian courtesy. It begins with rejoicing in the Lord and that greatly. Everything which Paul did he recognized as being in the Lord. In this case it was a recognition that, after a long period in which the Philippians had lost track of him, their concern had blossomed afresh after they had learned his whereabouts, and they had resolved to send again to his relief.

Their real concern for him had never abated. Through the years they had not forgotten him or his ministrations to them, but they were unaware of his location and had no opportunity to assist him in his sufferings and need. It is noteworthy that as soon as the opportunity was presented they moved in to help.

"Not that I complain of want; for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content." The original for the last word is *autarkeia.* **It means entirely self-sufficient. It was the**

grand ideal of the ancient Stoics. They refused to acknowledge any emotional or other need. Their method was to stifle all desire and passion and will not to care. Contentment must be learned. It does not come as a natural consequence. Paul achieved it by faith, while the Stoics sought it through fate. They had faith in themselves. Paul had faith in Jesus.

"I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound." To be abased means to exist in deprivation and humble circumstances. To abound means to have plenty. Paul had suffered afflictions, hardship, calamity and hunger. He had been poor while making many rich. He had existed as having nothing and yet possessing everything. He had run the whole gamut of human experiences and had shared in every kind of circumstance possible.

It is interesting that he speaks of "learning the secret" of contentment. Contentment escapes many in this world because they have never sought to penetrate the veil of concern. Paul attributes his ability to see behind the veil of Christ. "I can do all things in him who strengthens me." Nothing seems quite so prevalent in our day as discontent. All of us need to study and learn the secret. It would end domestic, national and international strife.

Seeking the Fruit (4:14-20)

Contents

> **Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble. And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving except you only; for even in Thessalonica you sent me help once and again. Not that I seek the gift; but I seek the fruit which increases to your credit. I have received full payment, and more; I am filled, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God. And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.**

"It was kind of you to share my trouble." In the Roman prison Paul was without provision except as contributed by friends from outside. He was alone and it came as a blessing to him to have Epaphroditus appear with the tangible proof that the saints at Philippi were sharing with him again. When the gospel was first introduced into Europe by Paul, who was then forced to leave Macedonia, the community at Philippi was the only one which entered into fellowship with him financially. At Thessalonica, the next stop, they sent to him at least twice.

"Not that I seek the gift." Paul told the elders of Ephesus that he had coveted no man's gold, or silver or apparel (Acts 20:33). His whole attitude toward making gain of the gospel is a rebuke to many who have acted in the opposite manner. He wrote to the Corinthians, "I will not be a burden, for I seek not

what is yours, but you; for children ought not to lay up for their parents, but parents for their children. I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls" (2 Cor. 12:14, 15).

"I seek the fruit which increases to your credit." There is a reward for ministering to servants of God. That which is given is regarded as seed which is sown (2 Cor. 9:6) and the promise is that God "will supply and multiply your resources and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way for great generosity, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God."

"I have received full payment and more." The apostle continues to use commercial language. The original for "received payment" is *apecho.* **In papyri and ostraca it generally had the sense of a receipt given for payment. Sometimes, as here, it was accompanied by** *panta,* **which makes it "payment in full." The letter Paul was writing is one that has this receipt attached to it.**

"I am filled, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent." This language seems to imply that more than money was sent. We have no way of knowing what was supplied. The gifts may have included clothing, reading matter, writing materials, and food. Paul asked for some of these later (2 Tim. 4:13). It is possible that money would have availed but little in the restricted confines of prison and in the inflation obtaining in Rome at the time.

"A fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God." This beautiful language comes as a high compliment. It is the equivalent of that used to describe the sacrifice of the altar which was described as having come like perfume into the nostrils of God. The things sent to Paul came as if anointed with incense. If we could catch the thought that our giving to one another is an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing unto God, we would be delivered from our grumbling over sharing what we have

received as a bounty from Him.

"And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus." It was a firm conviction of the apostle that God would supply every need of those who were generous, thoughtful and kind. Nothing that a congregation gives to the needy will ever go unrewarded. God beholds every act, knows the motivation of every heart, and rewards every deed of compassion. Out of the abundance of divine glory there is showered upon every person who is in tune with the divine whatever is required to meet his needs.

The Final Greeting (4:21-23)

Contents

> **Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you. All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's Household. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.**

"Greet every saint in Christ Jesus." The letter began with the inscription, "To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi." It closes with a greeting to every saint. Rich and poor, free and slave, young and old— all were included. No one was to be left out or omitted. The love of the apostle was wide enough to embrace them all. Every person whose faith had led him to acknowledge Jesus as the Son of God and to enter into relationship with God through the Spirit was to be greeted.

"The brethren who are with me greet you." We do not know who was included in this expression. Certainly it would include Timothy who co-authored the letter. It would also include those who were made confident in the Lord because of his imprisonment, "and are much more bold to speak the word of the Lord without fear" (1:14). The sense of fellowship which pervades the letter is wholesome and encouraging.

"All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household." We have no way of ascertaining how many disciples of our Lord were in the great world capital at this time. Paul had contact with them and they knew of this letter, and joined in an expression of their love for those in the Roman colony. The

saints in Caesar's household were probably the slaves and servants in the retinue of Nero. History informs us that many of these had come from Macedonia. Perhaps some were from Philippi. But they had announced their allegiance to a greater than the earthly monarch and were bound by ties of the Spirit to all of the saints.

"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit." With this lovely sentiment the letter to the colony of heaven closes. No one could think of a better sentence with which to conclude such a warm and friendly epistle. I close my little treatise on it with the same words. *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit!*

IN THE BEGINNING

by W. Carl Ketcherside

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IN THE BEGINNING

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And so I am sure that God, who began this good work in you, will carry it on until it is finished on the Day of Christ Jesus.

— Philippians 1:6

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In the Beginning

Contents

In the Beginning **is not just another book about creation. It does not deal with the primal order of things. Rather, it is about the beginning of a new approach to the vexing problem of sectarianism in our day. It was an approach made by one who had long been steeped in the sectarian spirit without realizing it. It represents some of the things said and done in order to discover freedom in Christ and to stand clear of all that opposed such freedom. It is not by any means the last word in such a struggle. It is possible there will be no last word on earth.**

The articles appearing herein were all written about 1957. Some of them were sent forth in fear and trembling. "I was with you in weakness and in much fear and trembling" (1 Cor. 2:3). Some were delivered orally. There has been no intent to be slavishly wedded to them as they originally appeared. Changes have been made in their construction. They have been altered and amended to better convey the idea originally hoped to achieve. The only thing that can be said about them is that they represent an honest attempt to find and recommend a better way than the one previously known.

There is probably nothing more traumatic than for one who has been shut up as a sectarian to be delivered by the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit. It is as if an earthquake had occurred which leveled the prison and left one standing in the midst of the wreckage unharmed and unhurt. All that had ever furnished security and protection is now gone, swept aside

by the elements. There is no retreat to be found, no shadow in which to hide. All of the subtle little hypocrisies of the past, the cavilling and the accommodations are gone. There is no place to flee except to Christ.

It is very difficult to confess that one has been in error much of his life. All past training is opposed to such a confession. It stifles pride. It runs counter to the ego. There is the question of those one has taught. His fellow-prisoners resent his admission. There is the problem of the congregations he has planted. Many of them would rather continue where they are than to acknowledge they have been mistaken. They prefer to embrace the errors with which they are familiar than the truth that is new.

There is the tendency to dart furtive glances in this direction or that, seeking some solution which will allow one to hold on to his own prestige. There is the frantic search for an escape. But none of these can avail. It is only when one admits that he is wrong, and has been wrong all of his life, that he can shed the past as a snake divests himself of his old skin, and be ready to move on to new heights. In the final analysis it is the best thing to do. One does not want to be forever trapped by his own past.

I began in the Missouri Synod Lutheran Church. It was a venerable institution with a stately ritual. Gathered about it were all of the grand teachings of the Monk of Erfurt. Not the least of its history was the tacking of the Ninety-Five Theses on the church door at Wittenberg. I entered it by inheritance. My grandparents were from Denmark and Schlesweig-Holstein. Like thousands of others they brought their religion with them. It was one of form and not of substance. They knew but little about it and nothing of its origin.

But they bitterly resented any attempt to merge with the social order around them. They kept their manners, customs,

and language. They expected all to conform to them. My grandmother even kept her old-world form of dress as far as possible. They resented all change with a deep hostility. They were old-order. When I was sprinkled by the Rev. Mr. Peterson I was really inducted into a way of life, more than into a church.

I left the Lutheran Church shortly before I was twelve. In spite of the tenderness of my years the plea that one could be a Christian and Christian only, without being some special kind of a Christian, gripped my heart and provided a certain kind of exultation. It was genuine and now almost sixty years afterwards, I remember how the Spirit strove with me. I recall the deep inward sense of gloom which was mine and the ineffable joy which came when I surrendered to His claim upon my life. I was immersed in a clear creek which wound its way through the pasture, and knew that I was forgiven for the childish sins I had committed.

It was only after I had been preaching the good news for a number of years that I awakened to the fact that I had not been a Christian only, but a partisan. I was actually a Church of Christ Christian. Although it came as quite a shock to find it out, I did not feel betrayed or frustrated. I realized it was a natural development. But I began from that moment on to recognize that the body of Christ was greater than any movement within it. The community of the reconciled was not limited to a movement which began arrogating to itself the name "Church of Christ" but embraced every saved person on the face of the earth. I was helped by a crisis experience in North Ireland in which I was brought face to face with Jesus. If I had never left the United States, or if it had never happened. I would no doubt be today exactly where I was. God forbid!

From 1951 to 1957 I went through all of the "withdrawal symptoms" essential to coming off the party spirit. I lay awake in bed at night and thought of all I had advocated that was wrong. During the day I studied the Word, and prayed, and

sometimes wept. How precious it all seemed to me then. I read every copy of the Millennial Harbinger, every Christian Baptist, and all of Lard's Quarterlies, during that time. I finally became convinced that we had betrayed the restoration movement as it was in the beginning. In its stead we had contrived something of our own which we advocated and which pampered our hearts into thinking we were heirs of that wonderful idea of those who launched it.

I became conscious of the scriptures we had twisted to justify division which was always condemned by the Spirit. Finally I was ready to launch out. It was in 1957 that I first began to advocate what has now become much more popular than it was in those first days. What I advocated was an idea whose time had come. Gradually, as we gained courage and momentum, and as knowledge increased and multiplied, the Mission Messenger began to grow until it went to every continent on the globe.

In the Beginning **will recover for you some of our feeble attempts to help men think, to let them see a brighter vision, and to lift them to a broader fellowship in Christ the Lord. As you read it, we sincerely hope that you will recognize it for what it is the first faint vision of a fellowship which is truly non-sectarian, based upon His will for the lives of us all. It is not the last word upon the theme. Much more and better material will be written by others in the future. May God use it all to His purpose and to the glory of Jesus!**

Grilling the Editor

Contents

Editor's Note. The following recorded interview may be of some interest to our readers. It represents my reply to questions proposed relative to my views on current topics. It was recorded and has been transcribed from the recordings. There have been occasional deletions and alterations made in order to clarify my position. I trust that you will give it a careful reading.

1. *I have noticed the repeated usage of the term "restoration" in your writings. What do you mean by this expression?*

By the term "restoration" I mean the full and complete return to the ancient order as established by our Lord through the holy apostles; that is the reinstatement upon this earth of the community of saints as originally planted in conformity with the purpose of heaven.

2. *Does this mean that you consider that no existing religious organization has yet achieved this goal?*

Exactly! We have not yet arrived at the place where any congregation or group of congregations can assert that they represent the primitive order in its fulness. There remains yet much land to be conquered.

3. *Why is a restoration necessary in the first place?*

The ancient order began to be corrupted even during the

days of the apostles. Paul declared while he was yet alive that "the mystery of iniquity" was already working. The plan of God was obscured, the sun was eclipsed, and the congregation forced to flee "into the wilderness." The actual bondage in spiritual Babylon lasted for 12 years, before the first rays of light began once more to penetrate the darkness. We are not completely free from the influence of Babylon to this very day.

4. *Is this attempt at restoration a new thing in the earth?*

Not at all. It began in England with such men as John Wycliffe in the fifteenth century, and was carried forward by Martin Luther in the sixteenth century. While these and their contemporaries were actually reformers of the existing order, they laid the groundwork for such men as Thomas Campbell, Alexander Campbell, Walter Scott, Barton W. Stone, et. al., who actually sought to go back beyond the Roman and Protestant schisms, and restore the original order as ordained by God. Our efforts are enriched by their discoveries of the last century.

5. *Has progress in restoration been as rapid in the last fifty years as before?*

Not at all! Those who were the spiritual descendants of the men mentioned made the mistake of thinking that they had taken them all the way back to the original, and thus have rested on their oars. They have spent much of the last half century trying to defend what they already have and wrangling with each other over what it is. As a result they have ceased to be a movement and have become a monument. A movement is ever changing. A monument stays where it is. It is visited by many to celebrate the accomplishment of dead heroes instead of living giants.

6. *What has been the end of all previous reformation and restoration attempts?*

Every such attempt has invariably ended by producing

another sect, generally more narrow, intolerant and uncharitable than those which have preceded it. As men concentrate on what they have discovered, they build a wall around it to protect it. All sectism is built upon fear— a fear of losing what has been gained. It is a strange phenomenon that when one learns something and leaves where he is to embrace it, it is being faithful to the Word, but when another learns something he has not discovered, and goes on to accept it, he is departing from the faith.

7. *Do you see any tendencies to indicate that the movement for restoration which was launched a century ago may suffer the same fate?*

Indeed, the most casual observer can detect such portents upon every side. The aim of Campbell and his fellows was to unite all true believers in Christ in one body. The descendants are themselves divided into some twenty-five factions, each one of which proclaims it is the only faithful body on earth today, and designates all the others as sects. The original movement was vibrant and living. It penetrated all kinds of defences thrown up by various individuals. But it was fair and open. Campbell allowed anyone to write for the *Millennial Harbinger***. He encouraged a full exchange of views regardless of how much they differed from his own.**

The closed-door policy of many of our papers today effectively put a halt to the exchange of new ideas. They became a clearing-house for the traditions of yesterday. Nothing would upset one of their editors like a new thought expressed. The result is that we have become parrots instead of "birds of passage." We are setting hens and not soaring eagles.

8. *What real contributions to restoration were made by the Campbells?*

They contributed much by their discovery that the

blessings of God were contingent upon His ordinances. Thus they recaptured from error the place, nature, purpose and design of baptism, as well as the relationship of the Lord's Supper to the community of the saints. They also began a work of rescue for some of the terms used by the Holy Spirit which had been much abused in the sectarian jargon of the day. Indeed, in his *Synopsis of Reformation* **Campbell gives this first place, as well he might. We can never be too grateful to these pioneers who blazed the trail across the untrammeled wilderness of sectism. They did a noble job and made all of us their debtors.**

9. *Do you have any well defined ideas as to what realms need further examination to effectuate the restoration?*

Yes, I do. Of course, I hold that every generation of men is obligated to make a complete and thorough investigation of God's entire system of revelation, so that the faith of each generation will not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God. It is too easy to become traditionalists, and most people become such for two reasons— they are by nature hero worshipers and they are mentally lazy. I grew up with a Bible in one hand and a sermon outline book in the other. It was only when I divested myself of the latter that I became free in Christ Jesus. What a difference it made.

As a stimulation to my personal study I have listed ten categories in which I think we are yet influenced greatly by the sectarian spirit, and where considerable research will be required before we approach the walls of Jerusalem. I doubt that many will be delivered from their mistaken views along these lines. There is too much verbal assault, and too much persecution to be expected. They are guarded by too many important men who either cannot understand what is being said or prefer evil to truth.

10. *It would probably take too long to enumerate all ten of these, but I wonder if you might mention a few of them which you*

consider to be of greater importance.

They are all important, for all have to do with our approach to God, and nothing is unimportant in that area. But I will mention a few. (1) A candid study of the vocabulary of the Holy Spirit. We need to recapture the original distinctions between such terms as gospel and doctrine, preaching and teaching. The gospel is good news. It is news of what God has done for us in Jesus Christ. It is not a compendium of laws, a moral code, or a volume of ethics. Jesus Christ is the gospel and the gospel is Jesus Christ. The gospel was fully proclaimed on Pentecost and not one word was ever added to the message which Peter there delivered. The gospel is for the world and not for the church. It is an evangel and you do not evangelize the saved.

We need to batter down unscriptural distinctions in such terms as minister and communion. Everything the saints do together is part of their communion. The Lord's Supper is just a part of it. We commune when we sing and pray together. We need to study diligently such words as fellowship and heresy, which are bandied about by individuals with "an axe to grind." I am doing extensive research on these last two now and hope to publish something relating to them soon.

(2) The means of induction into Christ. We have reduced this to a sort of five step, kitchen stepladder method, by which men have become convinced that they can pull themselves up into God's grace and place Him under obligation to save them. We have the whole thing worked out in a simple and easy method, a sort of five-finger exercise, which has been handed down to us and is sacred because of its longevity.

The idea of a personal covenant with the Lord, based upon conviction, conversion and consecration is almost foreign to our thinking. The concept of a covenant with God is wholly unknown to thousands among us. The congregations are filled

with many who were converted to water baptism but were never converted to the Lord Jesus Christ. They have confused the physician with his prescription, the captain with his orders, and the sower with his seed. Immersion in water is essential. But we should be immersed not because we believe in baptism but because we believe in Jesus. We have but one Savior. It is not a rite, ritual or ordinance, but entrance into a divine person.

(3). The subject of worship and what constitutes it. There is a general and widespread ignorance on the subject at present and the idea of "five items of worship" is no more in the Bible than the expression itself. Of all the Greek words translated "worship" not one is ever applied to anything we do when we assemble together on the first day of the week. The term "act of worship" is not even found in the sacred scriptures. Whatever I do in adoration of God is an act of worship, whether washing dishes or mowing the lawn. "Whatever you do in word or deed do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving God the Father the glory through him."

(4). The subject of the official name of the ecclesia of God. In this matter we are following the lead of the world of sectism about us, without due regard to God's revelation. We are defending our traditional pattern simply because we have always done it that way. These are a few of the ten areas of scriptural thought on which I feel we must make some adjustment if we restore the ancient order. It will be a difficult task for us. Many will not go along, preferring to stay as they have always been without disturbing the status quo. They confuse walking in the old paths with wallowing in the old ruts. Such people will become part of the problem and not part of the answer.

11. *What do you consider the greatest hindrances to resumption of the restoration movement?*

There are a number of hindrances. One is prejudice.

Someone has said, "Reasoning against a prejudice is like fighting against a shadow; it exhausts the reasoner, without visibly affecting the prejudice." We are generally opposed to anything which cuts across our thinking, and we condemn it without investigation. It seems ridiculous that anything could possibly be right if we have not known it.

Then there is traditionalism. Most of us, like the Chinese are ancestor worshipers. We want to do things like they do them "down home" although they may he wrong "down home." I suspect pride is our worst foe. Seneca said, "Tis not the belly's hunger which costs so much, but its pride." And it has been very costly to us. We have berated and ridiculed other religionists so long, it goes against the grain to have to admit that we have been wrong on some things.

One of the greatest hindrances is the divisive state of those who claim to be "The Church of Christ." In some localities there are as many as five congregations, all claiming to be the one, holy, apostolic, and catholic Church of God, not one of which will even be civil to the other, many of the members living in such mortal fear of "the powers that be" they will not even speak to each other on the street. It is difficult for the remainder of the religious world to see how a family can pull the drawstring of unity with one hand while slashing at each other with a meat cleaver in the other hand.

12. *Do you think what is generally referred to as "The Church of Christ" today is co-extensive with the scriptural expression "the body of Christ"?*

Of course, I might ask which "Church of Christ"? But I think I know what you mean. The congregation of God spoken of in the new covenant scriptures is identical with the one body mentioned in the same scriptures. It is composed of all the children of God. Not one saved person on earth is outside of it. God adds to it every person who surrenders to the sovereignty of

His Son and enters into covenant relationship with Him on the basis of the terms laid down by heaven. Every person on this earth, motivated by faith in Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God, who has turned away from sin, and submitted to immersion of his body in water on the basis of that belief, is a member of God's family. He is my brother. I am not sure that when we use the expression "The Church of Christ" that we use it in that sense. It is possible that we use it as a designation for a small and exclusive segment of believers who agree with our position on various points of teaching. Thus, we would imply that thousands of immersed believers in the Christ were not added to the family of God. This is, of course, a sectarian usage of the term.

13. *Do you believe that some of God's children may be in sectarian bodies?*

There are many people who belong to sects and yet are not sectarian. When fleshly Israel started out of Babylon they did not all leave at once. A contingent went out under the leadership of Zerubbabel, later another went out with Ezra, and still later another under Nehemiah. Those who were in Babylon until the last were as much God's children as those who had already arrived in Jerusalem. They were just in Babylon for a longer period. Thus it is with spiritual Israel in "Mystery, Babylon the Great." They may not all go out of Babylon at once, but as they become aware of their state, learn that they are in a foreign place, and have the glory of the city of Jerusalem pictured to them, they are led to evacuate the city of exile and start the trek toward Beulah land.

14. *Does this mean that it is possible to be saved in sectarianism?*

Let us put it this way! No sectarian can be saved, regardless of where he is. Sectarianism is a personal attitude toward truth. It is the "party spirit" and is condemned just as

adultery, fornication, murder, lying, theft and drunkenness. When a man becomes convinced that the party spirit is sinful, he ought to leave it, just as he abandons adultery or lying when he sees the guilt attached to them. You might as well ask if one can be saved if he continues in adultery as to ask if he can be saved while he continues in sectism. If one of God's children sees that he is in a party which separates, segregates and aggravates the remainder of God's children purely out of partisanship, he ought to get out of it and do so at once. Otherwise he will be lost because of his factious practice.

15. *Would this not imply that some might have to get out of "The Church of Christ" in some places?*

Certainly. It might be necessary to leave "The Church of Christ" in order to remain in the church of Christ. If one is a member of a group that is sectarian in its attitude and practices, he would either have to reform them in harmony with God's revelation, or leave them regardless of what name they wear. But he must do this in love. If he hates those whom he leaves, he will prove to be as sectarian as they. "Passions, intrigues, dissensions and factions" are called works of the flesh and it is said "that those who act this way will not inherit the kingdom of God."

16. *Do you not personally oppose theological seminaries and the one-man minister system as well as other things which some baptized believers endorse, and if so, does this not make you sectarian according to your definition?*

Yes, I oppose both of the things which you mention. I oppose the first because I believe it sets up a plurality of bodies where God has set up only one; and I oppose the second because it sets up one minister where the Lord has set up many. But I am not creating an "anti-college party" or an anti-ministerial party." I have convictions, very deep ones, upon both of these matters. I recognize that I stand almost alone. I do not deny that

those who differ with me on these things are my brethren. I go among them, work with them for the glory of God, talk with them, and truly love them. There are many who hate me, speak evil of me and misrepresent my position. They cannot understand how it is possible for someone with my convictions to labor with them. But I feel no rancor towards them. I am too busy working for the kingdom to indulge in hate. My brethren might be right!

17. *Are there not some who believe you are allied with a sect because you use more than one container for the fruit of the vine in the Lord's Supper and worship with congregations which have classes for Bible Study?*

This is true and we should not forget that there is not a single group on earth that is not branded as a sect by some other group. We should rejoice that we shall be judged by the Lord rather than by men, for then no person could be saved. Many earnest, conscientious persons believe that for the Lord's Supper to be acceptable, the fruit of the vine must be dispensed in one container. While I do not have that view, and think it is unduly and unnecessarily exclusive I do not disfellowship those who hold it. I am not a leader of a "multiple cups party." Those who hold to the one container are my brethren, and I love them. We have the same spiritual father and mother. I think it is sinful to call them "one cuppers" and to divide the family of God into "cups groups" and "one-cup groups."

Such language is the terminology of narrow sectism and reflects the party spirit. I am trying to purge myself of it, although it is difficult to do so, because we have always used it as a reflection on those who differ from us. But the same God who is over us all is rich unto all them that call upon Him. A realization that these are really my brethren, and the cultivation of sincere love for them, which rises above partisanship, helps me to eliminate hurtful and hateful phraseology. I trust that some day many of us will actually be able to work together as

one in Christ, but I know that I cannot promote unity while defending partisanship.

18. *How do you regard the Mission Messenger as relates to the thing you are striving to achieve?*

I am firmly resolved that it will not become an "official mouthpiece" for any sect, clique, party, or faction. The paper is my own individual enterprise. It is my means of communicating my views to my brethren and friends throughout the world. It is just a loudspeaker tuned in on a world frequency. Nell helps me to mail it out and is my constant stay and strength. God bless her! I know that many papers are recognized as official organs of various factions. The editors can often make or break a man. I feel sorry for brethren who are subservient to such a party spirit for they are not free men in Christ Jesus. Their lives are miserable.

I have asked several brethren to share regularly in this medium of expression and have invited all to do so to the extent of limited space. But *Mission Messenger* **is purely a personal, individual undertaking, and nothing more! Occasionally pressures are applied upon me to eliminate someone from writing with whom some of his brethren disagree. There are many who are anxious to use such a medium to get their views and opinions before the people, but they want to deny other brethren the same privilege and they become disgruntled if I publish something with which they are out of harmony. But so long as I publish this paper it will be a free journal and not the organ of a sect or faction. I thank God that he delivered me not only from the faction with which I was once associated, but from the factional spirit. That spirit exists before the faction and the faction grows out of it.**

19. *Do all of the regular contributors agree fully with your views?*

I have never asked them, but I am almost sure they do not. I am sure that I do not agree with any of them upon every matter. It is not necessary that they agree with me upon everything to get their material printed. I do not agree with everything they write for the paper, nor demand that they agree with everything I write. But I do defend their right and freedom to think, speak and act for themselves. If I disagree with something they write, and I think it is important enough, I'll attach a dissenting note; they also have a right to reply to anything I say, and so do any of our readers.

Emile Gavreau said about the public press: "Careers, reputations, friendships, life-long labors; the sanctity of homes; confidences in business; errors long atoned for; feuds long buried; the guarded secrets of the heart; innocent pleasures, loyalties— all the things that hitherto were inspected and honored in the society of men, this monster (the press) violated, ripped up, disgorged, blasted, and threw, mangled and bleeding, to the scavenging rabble, that fed ravenously upon it, and clamored always for more."

The tragedy of it is that all of this can be affirmed of the religious papers of our day in their onesided and lopsided presentations. I believe in the sacred God-given right of every person to study the scriptures for himself and the corollary that accompanies it, the right to form private judgments upon what is read. If this is done by someone who deeply loves the Lord I will regard him as my brother in the Lord, even though we may differ about the ideas he has formed. Jesus died for men and not their opinions. I refuse to destroy that for which He died for something for which He did not die.

20. *What are your personal primary aims for the future?*

There are two of them which I think to be of vital importance. I want to help in my weak way to restore the primitive pattern for the ecclesia of God, and also to lift up my

feeble voice in behalf of the unity of all the believers. I hold that the sheep of God have been neglected and driven out to wander among the hills of sectism. It is my fond hope, that if my life is extended sufficiently, that I may help to summon them to the high mountain where salvation and safety await. I would like to put my shoulder to the wheel of the Restoration vehicle and push it out of the mud and mire of neglect and indifference where it has been stalled so long.

21. *How do you plan to accomplish these objectives?*

I plan to go wherever the Lord opens up a door for me. My constant daily prayer is that he will open up great doors and effectual unto me even though the adversaries be many. Thus far about the only adversaries I have encountered are among the brethren I know best. I have spoken several times in large Jewish synagogues. I have participated in two Schools for the Christian clergy conducted by Temple Israel, and have publicly asked questions and filed objections which were well received. I secured permission from Rabbi Jacobs to attend weekly meetings at the Hillel Foundation for Jewish students and have contributed my part. I was the only non-Jew in attendance at the School of Judaism in Saint Louis.

I have met with Roman Catholic classes and discussed with the priest in the presence of the students. The discussions became so intense that I was asked not to return. I deeply regret that as I believe that we were accomplishing a great deal of good. I loved those who attended, even the priest, and I do not believe they regarded me as an enemy. On several occasions I have met with members of the clergy of the Lutheran churches and have discussed the implications of our various positions. I have held lengthy talks with members of the Concordia Seminary and have been upon their grounds many times. I have repeatedly eaten with young seminarians at their luncheon in the refectory and talked with them about sprinkling as a substitute for baptism.

In none of these conferences has anything but a spirit of humility and kindness prevailed. No one became angry or heated, despite our great differences. I shall miss no opportunity to go where I can find a hearing. It is ridiculous to refuse to go to a place where there is no one who sees things as I do. That is the place where I want to go. If the apostles had refused to go to a place where there was no congregation, there would be none on earth today. They purposely chose the very places where there were none who agreed with them and so shall I. Fortunately, I have lost all fear of what men shall do to me, and my whole trust is in God.

The vision of many preachers is frightfully limited. They refuse to go to a place where there is no "faithful church" and yet there can be no "faithful church" until they go. On that basis, the greater part of humanity would be doomed to hell, unless they accidentally stumbled on to the truth and started a congregation. Then they could get a preacher to come and tell them what was wrong with them. I want to go where people do not see things as I do. I get uncomfortable around a congregation where everyone is lined up with me. I want to get into virgin fields, or fields where Satan has been having a field day. I do not like to build upon another man's foundation all of the time. I want to go beyond the present regions. If I wait until there is a congregation there I will never go, and I know that if I never go, there may never be a congregation.

22. *Are there any encouraging aspects to be observed at present?*

Yes, there are. I do not worry about such things, and the word "discouragement" is not in my spiritual vocabulary. The One whom I serve opened up the Red Sea for His people, and caused the walls of Jericho to fall down before them. He has not lost any of His power. He has the whole world in His hand. No power on earth can stand against Him. The political attitudes of all those who seek to manipulate God's people will some day fail.

All I need to do is to get my bearings and march forward in faith. He will open up the way for me.

It is my task to sow and plant. It is his responsibility to give the increase. His word will not return unto Him void. All I need to do is to fulfill my part. But there are some good omens. Many people are being shaken, jolted and scared into studying more than ever before. I have spoken several times in denominational meeting-houses of late and been well-received. The question period which always follows my addresses have elicited many pointed and excellent questions. One encouraging feature is the increasing interest among some of my good Jewish friends.

23. *Have you always held your present views with reference to restoration?*

No, I have not! I came into this fellowship from a Lutheran background. My people on the maternal side were Danes. At first, I labored under the misconception that because we had discovered some truths which had been long hidden that we had found them all. Thus there was a time in my life when no problem was too great for me. I had all of the answers. I accepted without question the orthodox sermon outlines which had been handed down from previous generations, but when I saw they misapplied many scriptural texts, and violated most of the laws of Biblical interpretation, I began to investigate for myself.

I became convinced that we were well on the road toward creation of another sect. I saw the pressure groups manipulated by editors and preacher cliques, and beheld how the bulk of God's sheep were often exploited for the fleece. I learned how little any of us really knew, and how much more there was to learn. Accordingly, I began to lift up my eyes and look upon the fields. I saw how white they were to the harvest. My love for truth grew and with it a burning desire to share truth with my brethren and the world of mankind. I have made many mistakes

which are saddening to reflect upon. I have wasted much time. However, I trust in God to extend unto me His amazing grace, and to save me through His mercy and love. Without that prospect I am sure that I would be of all men most miserable, but with it, I am lifted up and walk on higher ground.

24. *What do you feel is the first great need of the congregations which are restoration minded?*

The first great need is to exhibit toleration for those who differ with them. Toleration is not the endorsement of anything that is wrong but the simple enduring of one who thinks it is right. By remaining together and receiving one another in love we shall grow toward each other instead of away from each other, and we shall find that the word of unity will help to produce unity of the word. If we separate or drive one another out we will then be reduced to the need for fighting one another from that time on. This will only hinder us in our real purpose.

25. *Do you think the holding of public debates will hasten the real restoration?*

No, they may actually hinder it. I doubt that they will achieve any substantial good, for the simple reason that in modern public debates, two factions each select a champion and throw them both into the arena in defense of partisan views. Debaters today are actually representatives of party positions. I know that theoretically their purpose is to examine the evidence, sift it, and determine what is true, but practically it does not work out that way. Debates, as now conducted, do not lend themselves to calm, unbiased appraisal of the issues. There is the constant temptation to use any means at hand to gain personal victory. The lust for combat fires the brain and kindles the blood. I would not want to become a professional debater or a recognized Goliath for any company of Philistines.

It is true that I have engaged in some public debates but

not often from choice, and it troubles me that I like debating. I may be forced to debate again rather than to see truth stigmatized, but my honest opinion is that in the long run, the cause may suffer in a community where such forensic struggles are waged. A much better approach would be that of the forum. With an unprejudiced chairman, two speakers would sit down at the same table on a public platform. Each in turn would be allowed 15 minutes to question his respondent, and the audience would be permitted to question either or both for an hour.

I am losing confidence in hit-and-run speakers who will not permit their positions to be examined in free and open questioning. Why should I spend two hours of my precious time listening to a man air his views and haranguing an audience, when I am not given opportunity to request clarification, or to examine those views? I thank you for these questions and even if you disagree with the answers I have given I still love you very deeply and cherish you.

In the Beginning

Who Wrote the Bible?

Contents

The book I hold before you in my hand is easily recognizable. It is the volume we call the Bible. I say we call it that because it nowhere refers to itself by that title. Indeed, we do not know who first called it the Bible. The name originated from the ancient seaport on the Mediterranean Sea which came to be known as Byblos. It lay about twenty miles north of the modern Beirut, and was originally called Gebal. It became the center of the maritime trade in ancient times. Sailing vessels from everywhere converged upon it to secure loads of cedar and copper.

Egyptian dealers brought papyrus to Byblos for export. It was made from strips of pith taken from reeds which grew along the Nile. These were pounded together and dried into sheets which were then used for writing. We get our word paper from papyrus. There were warehouses filled with this writing material in Byblos. The papyrus soon took on the name of the city where it was purchased wholesale. At first the word "biblos" was applied to all little books of papyrus, but gradually it came to refer to the volume called "the holy Bible" to distinguish it from other books.

The Bible I am holding looks a great deal like other books. It is bound in blue cloth over boards. The type was set by a computer. The paper was made from pulp to which trees of the forest were reduced. It was printed on a press, gathered, stitched, glued, and bound like other books in your library. It is

obvious that men had much to do with its production. But where did it come from? How did we receive it?

It will not be too much to concede that its origin was either natural or supernatural. If it was natural it originated with men. If it originated with men they must have been either good men or bad men. It would be incredible that bad men would have written it. It commends only what is good and condemns everything that is evil. It ends with all bad men in a lake of fire, suffering the pangs of eternal torment.

But it is the nature of bad men to excuse their evil. They constantly seek to justify it. They do not want to be held accountable. They try to make it appear that they are no worse in the final analysis than anyone else. They want to escape punishment. I doubt that wicked men would write, "There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek" (Romans 2:9). Certainly they would not write, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive good or evil, according to what he has done in the body" (2 Corinthians 5:10).

While evil men would not have written it good men could not have done so. The Bible claims to be a revelation from God. If it is the product of men, that is a falsehood. If it is a sham and pretence, those who wrote it could not have been good, for good men would not have palmed off such a cruel hoax on the world. The Bible is unique. It could not have been an invention of unlearned men. If it had been, men today with better education, equipment and knowledge should be able to produce a better Bible.

William Jennings Bryan, the "silver-tongued orator of the Platte," was called upon to deliver an address in Chicago, May 4, 1911, in celebration of the 300th anniversary of the King James translation of the Bible. In the course of his remarks he said: "Let the atheists and materialists produce a better Bible

than ours if they can. Let them collect the best of their school to be found among the graduates of universities— as many as they please from every land. Let the members of this selected group travel where they will, consult such libraries as they please and employ every modern means of swift communication. Let them glean in the fields of geology, botany, astronomy, biology and zoology, and then roam at will wherever science has opened up a way; let them take advantage of all the progress in art and in literature, in oratory and in history— let them use to the full every instrumentality that is employed in modern civilization; and when they have exhausted every source, let them embody the results of their best intelligence in a book and offer it to the world as a substitute for this Bible of ours. Will they try? If not, what excuse will they give? Has man fallen from his high estate, so that we cannot rightfully expect as much of him now as nineteen centuries ago? Or does the Bible come to us from a source that is higher than man— which?"

Perhaps it would be wise to allow the Bible to testify in its own behalf. What claim does it make for its origin? Do those who penned it claim to have originated it? The answer is that they uniformly claim for it a divine origin. There are about forty-two writers. They wrote over a period of sixteen hundred years. The first was Moses. The last was John. Every chapter in Exodus, the second book of Moses from six to fourteen begins with the expression, "The Lord said to Moses." In some of these chapters almost every paragraph thus begins. Now the Lord either spoke to Moses or Moses falsified. Yet history bears out that what God had predicted and promised came true.

John was an aged man when he wrote the Revelation letter. He had been banished to the isle of Patmos "on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus." He declared that he heard behind him a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet. He turned to see whose voice it was and saw a divine personage who identified Himself as the Living One who said, "I died and behold I am alive forevermore." He communicated to John and

commissioned him to write what he saw in a book and send it to the seven churches in Asia. What we have is that book.

In the interval of sixteen centuries between these two all of those who wrote said they did so at the bidding of God. Isaiah declared he heard the voice of the Lord (6:8). Jeremiah said the word of the Lord came to him (1:4). Ezekiel said the word of the Lord came to him and the hand of the Lord was upon him (1:3). Peter writes, "First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by the impulse of man, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God" (2 Peter 1:20, 21).

There is something to be understood before one approaches the scriptures. It is foundational. It is basic. About it there should be no doubt. No scripture of prophecy is a matter of one's own interpretation. He is not speaking of our application of our mental powers in an attempt to fathom what the prophet meant. He is dealing with the origin of the message. The prophets did not see events and then seek to interpret them. They were not forecasters of the future, basing their predictions upon what they saw.

Prophecy does not come from human impulse. No prophecy of scripture ever came that way. Isaiah did not see the conditions around him and hazard a judgment about the results. The prophets were motivated by the Spirit. They spoke from God. Isaiah began by crying out, "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the Lord hath spoken" (1:2).

Paul said about his gospel, "For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ" (Galatians 1:12). He said, "For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you" (1 Corinthians 11:23). God chose to make known His will to men through men. When one whom God chose and qualified as an ambassador makes known the word of God there is a responsibility upon the part of the

hearer. So Paul said "And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers (1 Thessalonians 2:13).

What it really is! **The word of God. But we have a check-point. It is at work in you believers. Now if the believers demonstrate a life-style which differs from those about them and from their previous conduct, it can be attributed to the word of God as a motivating force. Jesus declared "Ye shall know them by their fruits." He asked some pertinent questions. "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" Of course they do not. Grapes are gathered from grapevines. Figs are produced on fig trees.**

Jesus continues, "Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit." Wherever the Bible has been discovered it has worked reform. It has overthrown superstition. It has elevated mankind. Let us give you an example from the Book itself.

Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign over Judah. He was the son of Amon and grandson of Manasseh. Both of these were very wicked. It was said of the first that he filled Jerusalem from one end to the other with innocent blood. But they did not have Jeremiah the prophet, or Huldah the prophetess, or Hilkiah the high priest to instruct them as did Josiah. It was in the eighteenth year of his reign that Josiah commissioned Hilkiah to begin repair of the temple. Hilkiah found the book of the law which Moses had written many years before and sent it to the king.

When the king heard the words of the book he tore his clothing. He summoned all the people both small and great to the temple. Standing by a royal column he read in their ears all

the words of the book of the covenant. He "made a covenant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord, and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all their heart and all their soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people stood to the covenant."

The result of this renewal was a great reformation. Idols were broken down. Altars were smashed to bits. Priests who had been appointed to conduct the worship for the sun, the moon, the planets and the stars were deposed. Cult prostitutes and homosexuals were driven out. Horses dedicated to the worship of the sun were removed with their chariots. The Passover was celebrated again. It is written that "No Passover like this one had ever been celebrated by any of the kings of Israel or of Judah, since the time when judges ruled the nation."

It was the restoration of scripture which worked the mighty reforms of Luther, the Augustinian monk. In the lonely castle at Wartburg where he had been a virtual prisoner for his own safety he meditated upon these things. One historian records that "The doctrine of the Church, the scholastic theology, knew nothing of the consolations that proceed from faith, but the Scriptures proclaim them with great force, and there it was that he had found them. Faith in the Word of God had made him free. By it he felt emancipated from the dogmatic authority of the Church from its hierarchy and traditions, from the opinions of the schoolmen, the power of prejudice, and from every human ordinance. Those strong and numerous bonds which for centuries had enchained and stifled Christendom were snapped asunder, broken in pieces, and scattered round him; and he nobly raised his head freed from all authority except that of the Word."

A papal decree had forbidden giving the Bible to the German people in the vulgar tongue. But Luther had said "Would that this one book were in every language, in every

hand, before the eyes, and in the ears and hearts of every man." He saw that the translation of the scriptures was the one essential to delivering the people from what he termed "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church." "Scripture without any comment is the sun from which all teachers receive their light." All of the tremendous gains which have been made, and which have swept like a tidal wave over the heart have come as a result of the translation of the Word of God in the vernacular of the people.

J. R. Green, who wrote a "Short History of the English People" which made a book of 872 pages, says, "No greater moral change ever passed over a nation than passed over England during the years which parted the middle of the reign of Elizabeth from the meeting of the Long Parliament. England became the people of a book, and that book was the Bible. It was as yet the one English book which was familiar to all Englishmen; it was read at churches and at home; and everywhere its words, as they fell on ears which custom had not deadened, kindled a startling enthusiasm."

Green continues, "But far greater than its effect on literature or social phrase was the effect of the Bible on the character of the people at large. Elizabeth might silence or tune the pulpits; but it was impossible for her to silence or tune the great preachers of justice, and mercy, and truth, who spoke from the book which she had again opened for her people. The whole moral effect which is produced now-a-days by the religious newspaper, the tract, the essay, the lecture, the missionary report, the sermon, was then produced by the Bible alone, and its effect in this way, however dispassionately we examine it, was amazing."

It seems to me that the Bible had to be given because of our deep need for it. Men required light and the sun was given for it. Would God withhold from man the moral light which was required to illumine his steps? It is true that Nature speaks of

God. The heavens declare his glory. The firmament demonstrates his handwork. By familiarizing ourselves with her marvelous works and interlacing power we can learn a great deal. But there is still required a special revelation to inform men of the nature and origin of sin and the means of his salvation from it.

He who reads the book of Nature reads from a page that is blackened with men's sins. "Man's inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn." All of creation awaits with eager longing for God to reveal his sons. "For creation was condemned to lose its purpose, not of its own will, but because God willed it to be so" (Romans 8:19, 20). The fall-out from man's transgression has created a smog over the universe so that we see through a glass darkly. Genius is the interpreter of Nature but not the prophet of God. It may tell us a great deal of what is below the sun but can tell us nothing that is above it.

Reason is the placing of two known facts together in such a manner as to arrive at a third and new fact called a conclusion. But if one of the facts is supposition the conclusion will not be correct. It is possible to draw the wrong conclusion even if the facts are correct. Human reason is faulty. It has often betrayed its possessor. It is limited. There are things we cry out to know which we cannot discern. Conscience has its recurring moods of hesitation and bewilderment. The religious instinct may betray us into bowing before an idol, trembling in the presence of an eclipse, or shuddering at the contemplation of death. Much can be learned by Science in the study of man, but Science is limited to data which is at hand, to man as he is. It cannot probe beyond his beginning. It is forced into guesswork by his origin educated though that guesswork may be.

The inutility of man's power to think without enlightenment from God can be seen in the gropings of the most profound thinkers of ancient paganism. The finest truths uttered by them were splendid guesses rather than assured certainties.

They were celebrated as much for what they did not reveal as for what they disclosed. Socrates advised his pupil Alcibiades to forego his sacrifice at the temple until a teacher from heaven could be sent. He said, "We must wait patiently until someone, either a god or an inspired man, teach us our moral and religious duties."

Plato, when addressing the Athenians, says that, "unless God, in pity, send them an instructor, they must remain in a state of ignorance forever." Xenophanes, founder of the Eclectic sect, closes his work on Nature with the sentence, "No man has discovered any certainty, nor will discover it, concerning the Gods, and what I say of the universe. For if he utters what is even most perfect, still he does not know it, but conjecture hangs over all." So God had to speak or man was doomed to remain in a state of ignorance forever. Pope has said, "Either God finally has spoken or there is no God, and man is the incomprehensible creation of chance, and the sport of the chance that has created him."

Those who deny the Bible as an authoritative statement of moral truth, generally prefer to live in a culture which has been shaped by it. Atheism has built no hospitals. One of us could hardly assess the effect of the book upon the lives of all of us. Most of us could say with John Wesley, "I am a creature of a day, passing through life as an arrow through the air. I am a spirit, coming from God, and returning to God: just hovering over the great gulf; a few moments hence I am no more seen; I drop into an unchangeable eternity! I want to know one thing— the way to heaven; how to land safe on that happy shore. God himself has condescended to teach the way. He hath written it down in a book. O give me that book! At any price, give me the book of God! I have it. Here is knowledge enough for me. Let me be a man of one book. Here then, I am, far from the busy ways of men. I sit down alone. Only God is here. In his presence, I open, I read his book for this end— to find the way to heaven."

If the thesis be true that there is a need for the Bible, and the Bible was given to meet that need, we should be able to show that once it was given there was a noticeable change in man. That such was the case can be easily demonstrated.

Pascal wrote, "And it happened that in the time of the fourth monarchy, before the destruction of the second temple, the pagans in multitudes adored the true God and led an angelic life; women consecrated to religion their virginity, and their lives; men voluntarily renounced all the pleasures of sense. That, which Plato was unable to persuade a few of the wisest and best informed of men of his time to do, a Secret Power, by means of a few words, now effected in thousands of uneducated men."

But in order to enforce our reasoning let us consider the state of the world when it was entered by the Christian faith. We shall not make reference to the sensuality and passion which were a way of life among the more uncivilized regions of the earth. Instead, let us look at the localities where the light and moral vigor of the heathen world were concentrated. Let us survey Rome and Greece, where philosophy held her court, and literature and the arts were cultivated with the utmost devotion and success.

Paul, who lived at this time, and who sought to take the teaching of Christ into the very territory in which we are interested wrote that, "Claiming to be wise they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man or birds or animals or reptiles." He further declares that they were "filled with all manner of wickedness, evil, covetousness, malice. Full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity, they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless."

Deities were multiplied until there was a god for everything and anything answered for a god. There was a god

for the trees of the forest and each tree in the forest could become a god. Athens which became a center for learning was full of statues dedicated to different deities. Those of various countries were so crowded together that it was said, "In Athens it is easier to find a god than a man."

Rome exceeded Athens in the number of her gods only, by having, as mistress of the world, all nations to collect from and all forms of paganism to countenance. In "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" Gibbon says, "the deities of a thousand groves and a thousand streams possessed in peace their local and respective influence; nor could the Roman who depreciated the wrath of the Tiber, deride the Egyptian who presented his offering to the beneficent genius of the Nile. Every virtue and every vice acquired its divine representative, every art and profession its patron, whose attributes, in the most distant ages and countries, were uniformly derived from the character of their particular votaries. It was the custom of the Roman to tempt the protectors of besieged cities by the promise of more distinguished honor than they possessed in their native country. Rome gradually became the common temple of her subjects, and the freedom of the city was bestowed on the gods of mankind."

At the very time when Peter was announcing to the Gentile Cornelius the only remedy for sin and evil, the gospel of Christ, Seneca, the Stoic professor, was writing, "The world is filled with crimes and vices. Things are too far gone to be healed by any regimen. Men are battling for the palm of reprobate manners. Each day lust waxes and shame wanes. Trampling down all that is good and sacred, lust hies it whithersoever it will. Vices no longer shun the light. So barefaced is wickedness become, and so wildly does it blaze up in all bosoms, that innocence is not to say rare, but is nowhere to be found."

Contrast this with the letter of Clement to Diognetus. After eloquently demonstrating the vanity of the heathen idols, and the superstitious practices of the Jews, he continues: "The

Christians are not separated from other men by earthly abode, by language or by custom. Nowhere do they dwell in cities by themselves. They do not use a different speech, or affect a life of singularity. They dwell in the cities of the Greeks and barbarians, each as his lot has been cast; and while they conform to the usages of the country in respect to dress, food and other things pertaining to the outward life, they yet show a peculiarity of conduct wondrous to all. They inhabit their native country, but as strangers. They take their share of all burdens as citizens, and yet endure all kinds of wrong as though they were foreigners. Every strange soil is their fatherland, and everyone's fatherland is a strange soil unto them. They are in the flesh but they live not after the flesh. They tarry on earth, but their citizenship is in heaven. They obey the laws, and they conquer the laws by their lives. They love all, and are persecuted by all. They are unknown and yet are condemned; they are killed, and made alive. They are poor, and make many rich. They are blasphemed, and yet justified. They are reviled, and they bless . . . What the soul is to the body, that Christians are in the world. The soul dwells in the body and yet is not of the body; and Christians dwell in the world but are not of the world."

In the Beginning

Buried Treasure

Contents

When our Lord was upon earth he spent his entire life in an occupied country. Roman soldiers were garrisoned throughout Palestine, and were not always considerate of the feelings of the Jewish populace. Frequently unprovoked attacks were made upon their homes and anything of value was confiscated. Many of the country and village inhabitants had little use for the officials in Jerusalem, because they regarded them as collaborationists with the occupational forces.

For this reason many people hid their valuables in the earth, or in caves. Often the location was forgotten, or the individual who deposited the money, or other securities, was killed. It was not an uncommon thing for one to stumble rather casually upon a treasure trove, and this gave rise to one of the parables of Jesus. Our Lord told two stories of discovery which bear some relationship to each other.

The first is that of a gem merchant, possessed with an obsession that he must locate a flawless pearl. He traveled over the face of the known globe and finally found that for which he had diligently sought. The second is the story of a man who was walking through a field and inadvertently came upon a treasure that had been hidden. I am convinced that the point of these parables is the different way in which truth is discovered. Some men find it only after long and arduous sacrifice and effort. Others, almost without effort, seem to be kicking about, and there it is.

My purpose today is not to emphasize the methods involved in locating truth, but to draw attention to the fact that there is a hidden treasure available, and there is no greater adventure possible for the human mind, than to seek for it. I have long held that the Creator of the universe and the Author of truth, wrote two books called Nature and Revelation. Both of these have one feature in common— they release their knowledge constantly and on an ascending scale. Therefore, no generation will ever exhaust the possibilities of either.

I do not believe there is a single atom that has come into existence since God rested on the seventh day, but we are discovering new facts about atomic energy every day. Thousands of gleaming laboratories all over the earth furnish testing grounds for every conceivable kind of research into natural phenomena, and yet it is the universal opinion of scientists that we have just scratched the surface. I am persuaded that when our Lord descends from heaven with a shout, when the heavens shall be rolled back as a scroll, and the elements melt with fervent heat, there will still be unsolved problems in the physical universe.

In the same way I hold that there has not been a single truth added to the revelation of God since the lonely seer upon crescent-shaped Patmos, penned the words, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all," wiped the ink from the quill, and rolled up the scroll. Since that day tens of thousands of books have been written on Biblical themes, and never a day goes by that the whirring presses do not turn out hundreds more in all of the recorded languages of mankind. Yet there are depths not yet probed, and veins not yet mined.

It is one of the tragedies of the ages that each generation thinks it has exhausted the possibilities of Biblical research and, instead of seeking for regions beyond, concludes there are none, and girds itself to defend the status quo. Almost every great breakthrough has come because of efforts of intrepid and

courageous individuals, and almost every one has been violently opposed by the church. The fact is that history will show that we owe all of our spiritual progress to men who were branded as "heretics" and hounded out by their contemporaries.

Almost all of us are at least possessed of a passing knowledge of the troubles incurred by Galileo. When I read of his remarkable discoveries in the fields of mathematics, science, and medicine, and realize how each bit of modern research serves but to confirm what he taught, I am amazed that he could encompass within one mind all that he learned. But the institutional church of his day had declared the earth to be fixed, and the center around which the rest of the universe revolved, and when Galileo adopted the Copernican theory he was summoned to appear before Pope Paul V and admonished to relinquish immediately the heretical proposition that this is a solar system, and that the sun is the center.

Our position with reference to this is that it is exactly what you might expect from Catholics, and that popes are handy about plastering the label of heretic upon anyone who does not agree with them. But I suggest that we continue to assail Rome and not examine our own history too closely. We have had our share of Galileos also. It is abundantly evident that every religious movement eventually gravitates into the control of the priestly class, and when it does, the prophets are killed. Priests are interested in maintaining things as they are. Prophets are concerned with having things as God wants them. The first tells it like it is, the other like it ought to be. One wants to continue turning the cider mill; the other often upsets the apple-cart!

There has never been a reformation that was not sparked by heretics. The heroes of today are the heretics of yesterday. A heretic is one who has not yet waited long enough. One generation stones the prophets to death, the next gathers the stones and piles them up as a monument so their memory will live. In view of the unpopularity of original thinking, and the

dangers incurred in Biblical exploration, precious little of it has been done in the realm of the Spirit. Thus, while we have made great strides in bringing the physical universe closer together we have accomplished relatively little toward uniting the whole family of God.

To some extent we have discouraged original thought and held a threat over the heads of those who engaged in it. This always results in three things. First, it produces sterility. Inbred thinking is like inbred social structure. It perpetuates and proliferates weaknesses until eventually virility disappears. In the spiritual realm it produces a generation of parrots who proclaim over and over the same inherited sermon outlines whether relevant to cultural needs or not. And anything which produces parrots is for the birds.

Second, it creates an atmosphere of unhealthful fright. Men whose inner beings throb and pulsate with the urge to speak forth the whole truth are held back, perhaps because of one elder, or an organized clique or claque, whose theme song is "I Will Not Be, I Will Not Be Moved!" It is hard to chase the devil while looking over your left shoulder to keep an eye cocked on your brethren. Most preachers are never allowed to get up steam of their own. They are kept hot under the collar from the warm breath of a posse of vigilantes blowing down the necks of their Drip-Dry Arrow shirts.

Third, it stifles the spirit of adventure. The word of God is loaded with hidden treasure never yet brought to light. But much of it will not be found by those who get a vicarious thrill from reading "The Gold Bug" by Poe, or "Treasure Island" by Stevenson. All of us have the longing for adventure when we are young. I used to lie in the hay-loft on a rainy day trying to decide whether I would be a lion-tamer, an Arctic explorer, or something useful, like a pirate. But when I really met Jesus Christ the problem was settled, and the greatest adventure possible began.

I am aware of all of the implications of the statement of Jesus about accepting his teachings as a little child, but I personally wonder if he may not have included in it the wide-eyed wonder with which a tow-headed kid accepts the challenge of that which lifts him in imagination out of his everyday world. As some of you know, a few years ago I did a series of articles entitled, "Adventures in Religion," and I confess that it was an exhilarating experience in my life.

It seems too bad that the church has to get old, and grow senile, and its members become sedentary, and want to doze in the rocking-chairs on God's front porch, and growl at the "Jesus Folk" who can walk barefoot on the rough sidewalk or pebbly driveway. The church was never intended to be a retirement center or a vacation retreat. It should be a research center, a truth laboratory, the headquarters of a divine exploration society. Certainly it should not have the atmosphere of a morgue.

Of course there are no truths new to God, but there are truths which can be new to us. They are old when measured by time, but new when judged by our understanding. And some which were once known, have since been lost, and need to be rescued from the ocean floor and brought to the surface again. We are indebted to every person in the world who shares a truth with us, but we must ourselves become explorers of God's rich domain and bring to light those concepts which will brighten the world.

The great Pennsylvania oil deposits were discovered by an astute observer. A farmer noticed that his cows would not drink from the waters of a creek which flowed through his pasture. He found an oily scum on the surface of the water. He decided to sell the place as soon as he could find a buyer, and he did so. The new owner also found the scum, but he had it analyzed and found it to be oil of a high quality seeping up from a subterranean depth. The original developer continued to pump

until his wells began to slack off a bit. Then he sold out, congratulating himself upon his cleverness. But the next investors drilled deeper and discovered a pool which made the first one seem like a puddle.

Those who think they have already discovered all there is to find are always upset when I talk like this. They write me blistering letters and accuse me of encouraging people to "go beyond" the doctrine of Christ. They ask me to name one thing in God's plan they have not restored. Most of the time I just write "Humility" on the bottom of their letters and mail them back. But the trouble with such brethren is that they suffer from delusions of grandeur and fantasies of infallibility. No one will go beyond the doctrine of Christ as long as he delves deeper into it. His tunnel may bring him up outside of our party walls, but he will not be the first person to escape from prison unexpectedly.

I am quite convinced that there are depths we have not yet explored, and when we get more fully into them we will find ourselves increasing in appreciation for God's grace. For example, a few years ago, while I was in Scotland, I became interested in studying the relationship of the *synagogue* and *ekklesia*, or synagogue and church, as we would say. When I returned to the United States I haunted the libraries of great seminaries, reading assiduously and following every new lead as far as I could go.

Repeatedly I found reference to Vitringa, the Dutch scholar of many years ago. I wrote for information to the librarian at Yale, who informed me they had an ancient copy of his work, but it was in Latin. He doubted that it had ever been translated into English since theological studies several centuries ago were all conducted in Latin. But, from the librarian at Princeton, I learned that an English translation had been made by a Gilbert Fellowes. I put four book-finders from the "Antiquarian Book Society" in Great Britain on the trail. One of

them wrote that there was a copy in the shelves of the library of the University of Aberdeen, Scotland. I arranged an inter-library loan and was able to have this old leather-bound volume for thirty days inspection and study.

The result of my research changed many of my concepts about the *ekklesia* of God. I could see why James would write about a gathering of the saints and say, "My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. For if there come into your synagogue a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, etc." (James 2:1, 2). I received a wholly different impression about the perennial argument over the name the church should wear. The nature and structure of the primitive community of the saints was suddenly clearer in my mind. I came to understand why the destruction of Jerusalem, by Titus, in A. D. 70, was essential to the preservation and purity of the Good News.

Of the greatest importance was the insight and incentive that I received for work with the Jews of our day, and the many visits I made to their modern temples and synagogues stemmed from the almost accidental resolution made one day in Scotland to study the relationship of two institutions existing side by side, but sometimes in direct conjunction in the first century. And while I never have developed the theme in class or in print, my book *The Royal Priesthood* is a by-product. A great deal of the research for it was done in the library of Temple Israel.

I must not bore you with this type of thing but I should like to mention that, among other things, I was forced to change my mind about the Pharisees. When I came to understand their purpose and aim I knew why Jesus told the multitudes, "All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do." I also knew what he meant when he said, "But do not ye after their works: for they say and do not." My respect for the Pharisees was increased by a knowledge of their goal, and this was good, because, while I am quite convinced that we have

failed thus far in restoring the first-century church, I do think we have succeeded beyond our dreams in restoring the first-century Pharisees.

There are hidden treasures in many of the words which the Spirit employed. We tend, because of familiarity with them, to run over them, as one would drive a car over gold-bearing rock. Occasionally there is a glint in the sunlight, but we are too busy to stop and investigate. Fortunately, we have better tools with which to labor in our generation. The spades of the archaeologists have uncovered all sorts of meaningful records which are flashlights to illuminate words and passages in the divine record. Each new find corroborates the authenticity and validity of God's revelation. In doing so, it provides us with additional information as a foundation for study.

I think, for instance, that we have not exhausted the possibilities involved in such expressions as "the glory of God." We ought to be deeply concerned about it, because we hope to share in it. I find myself being drawn more and more into a study of "the glory." This is because of my deep interest in the prayer of Jesus for oneness of the believers, as a condition of universal acceptance of the supreme fact of the ages. Many of our brethren who can quote John 17:20, 21, have never stopped to underline the words "glorify," and "glory," in the chapter in which these verses occur.

But the prayer of Jesus is not only for a sharing of oneness in the faith, but of sharing in the glory of God. "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (verse 5). "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word, that they all may be one as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee" (verses 20, 21).

What connection is there between the glory of God and oneness in Christ? There must be some relationship because

Jesus goes right on to say, "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one." Does this teach that our oneness is a given unity, and that it is not related to sharing intellectual concepts, ideas, opinions, and doctrinal interpretations? If the glory which God bestowed upon Jesus, is in turn bestowed upon his disciples that they might be one, what is this glory, and how does it produce this oneness?

Our Lord continues in these words: "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." To be one as God and Christ are one is made contingent upon receiving the glory. The glory existed before the world was made. It was shared with Jesus and now he shares it with the new creation, and he does so that they may be one as he and the Father are one. The divine unity is a sharing of glory, and to possess this unity we must possess this glory.

This means that the Father is in the Son, and the Son is in the saints. "I in them, and thou in me." By sharing the divine glory we become one, not only with one another, but with God and the Living Word. "That they may be made perfect in one." And when this marvelous, transcendent relationship exists two things will result. The world will know that God has sent Jesus, that is, that heaven invaded the earth. And it will know that God loves all of his sons as he loved his only begotten Son.

Now I must confess that I have never yet seen an exhaustive treatise on the nature of the glory of God. There are some excellent word studies, and many precious gems have been mined, but I suspect that there is a great deal more to be discovered. Since Paul declares that one of the things belonging to his kinsmen in the flesh, the Israelites, was *the glory* (Romans 9:4), perhaps we must await the conversion and commitment of some of these to the Messiah, in order to increase our fund of knowledge.

Not long ago I was thinking about this aspect of it, when I discovered that the Hebrew root word for glory is one which literally means "weight," that which is heavy. Immediately I recalled the words of Paul, given in comfort to the harassed and tormented in this life. "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Since that time I have not been able to eliminate either the thought or phrase from my mind. Glory is not an evanescent, fleeting quality. It is not as light as a feather but as solid as faith in the eternal values.

But this is enough about one word and the great unexplored vistas which lie ahead to challenge us. We have not yet scaled all of the snow-capped peaks of revelation. We must enlist mountain-climbers who will toil upward, risking prestige and reputation with the party, to survey distant ranges. There must be "spelunkers" in the church, brethren who cannot rest easy until they have explored the deepest recesses of the cavern of truth. And when they have gone more deeply into God's word they may learn that we should have been emphasizing "the unity of glory" rather than thinking so much of "the glory of unity." For there is no glory in simply being united. The power is present when we are united in and for the glory of the Lord.

The blessing of recovering hidden treasure from the word of God lies in the fact that it helps to consecrate life and sanctify death. And frequently a word or phrase which seems inconsequential will prove to be of inestimable value. A deep-sea diver who specializes in the exploration of wrecks on the ocean floor, recently told how he brought up a small encrusted object which, when carefully pried apart consisted of a handful of antique Spanish silver coins. I felt almost as much pleasure as he did when I discovered what lay beneath the surface of the little word "depart," in the statement of Paul: "For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which for me is far better."

The Greeks used the word for "loosing the hawser" of a ship moored to the dock, and allowing the vessel to drift out to the unknown sea. Nothing is more majestic to me than the sight of a huge liner slowly backing out into the harbor in preparation for a voyage to far-away lands beyond the horizon. In life I am bound to the dock. I am not free. Though I may strain at the ropes I am still held captive. But death is the harbor-master who lifts the ropes and casts them off and frees me to sail into the sunset. Tennyson caught the picture in "Crossing The Bar," when he wrote, "And may there be no moaning of the bar, when I put out to sea."

But the Greeks used the word in another sense. It was their term for "striking a tent," that is, taking down a tent and rolling it up, at the end of a campaign. When a weary battle was over, and the sound of fighting had died away, the order was given to take down the tents, and prepare to go home. That is the way Paul regarded death. He had fought a good fight, and he was now ready to move out of the tent in which he had been living under great hardship. The earthly tabernacle was to be folded up and deposited in the container made for it, while the soldier, mustered out, stacked his arms and prepared for the journey back home. When the Christian dies, he does not leave home, he goes home!

There was also a third way in which the word was used. It was employed to describe the removal of a load from the back of a pack animal at the close of day. Picture, if you can, a long train of camels or donkeys, each carrying a heavy burden, plodding along through the heat of the day. The animals grow ever more footsore and weary. Then as the sun turns the western sky to red and gold, and the cool breeze of the dusk fans the desert, a halt is called, and the loads are lifted and thrown to the ground. The welcome rest has come at last.

Death is the lifting of the load. No more sorrow, pain and grief can cause heaviness. There shall be no more pain, or

sorrow, or weeping. All of this is caught up in the word "depart" as used by Paul, and it makes death more tolerable, more welcome and friendly. And there are hundreds of words such as this, flecked with the precious ore which, once released will brighten our lives, kindle our hope afresh and give meaning to the frail existence which is ours in this world.

It is for this reason that I trust that none of you will be content to simply camp upon the slopes to which our fathers have attained. There are higher mountains yet ahead, and more noble peaks to be ascended. Do not be content with a mere holding action. We were not called to hold the fort but to storm it. Our task is to climb walls and not build them. If you make of yourselves divine researchers in the fields of God, you may yet recover for us some glowing bloom of truth, and there will be one less flower "born to blush unseen and waste its fragrance on the desert air."

We must use our Bible classes as launching pads to put us into orbit, and not allow them to become simply feeding stations where we come to fill ourselves on the food which others have processed, and grow lazy and torpid because of the ease of picking up that which others have scattered. The mind must be exercised if it is to become strong, and this means that it must be taught the art of meditation, a word which, in the Hebrew, means "chewing the cud."

Just as a cow regurgitates the food she has collected in her first stomach and chews it over and over to derive every particle of nourishment from it, so we must recall the things which we have studied to mull them over in a serious fashion and extract from them every bit of precious meaning. The sheep of God, like all other sheep, were intended to be ruminants, and only as we ruminate upon truth can we survive.

Preaching Under Difficulty

Contents

I think that, among all of the preachers of the gospel mentioned in the Bible, Timothy remains one of my favorites. This probably results from my knowledge of the circumstances which combined to make it difficult for him to achieve his goal. It has been said that you can prove by the law of aerodynamics that a bumblebee cannot fly. The size of his body, coupled with the shortness and frailty of his wings makes it impossible for him to lift his body into the air. Fortunately, the bumblebee has not studied science, and does not know what he cannot do, so he goes on and does it anyway. It must have been a little that way with Timothy and preaching.

If he had been attending the Sunrise School of Preaching in Lystra, he would undoubtedly have been voted the student least likely to succeed. Just about everything was against him. And if you are discouraged by some of your little hangups and setbacks, it might serve a good purpose for you to review a few of his handicaps.

1. Timothy was the offspring of a racially-mixed marriage. His mother was a Jewess, but his father was a Greek. We do not know what possessed Eunice to fall in love with a man of another, and a despised race. She was Orthodox, and she knew what the social penalty was for one who was married to a Gentile. I wonder what transpired at home when she informed her mother of her intention. In any event she went ahead with her plans, and we hope that when little Timothy arrived on the

scene, all was forgiven.

But I would also like to know what happened when the baby approached the eighth day of his life. Eunice had been reared in the unfeigned faith of the Law. She realized that without circumcision her baby would not be recognized as one of the covenant people. Perhaps his father thought that this rite was silly and unnecessary, and he may have actually forbidden it. In any event, we know that the little lad was not circumcised.

2. So Timothy was the scion of a home which was divided over religion. And I can personally testify of the impact of such schism upon the mind of a tender child. When I first remember the home into which I was born, I recall that my father was an agnostic and my mother a devout Lutheran. Hers was a family tradition running back for several generations in Denmark. And although I was sprinkled and christened before I was a month old by the Reverend Mr. Peterson, I was still a pawn for family strife after I became old enough to realize it.

It is a tribute to the grace of God that our family eventually became united in Christ. We are not certain that the father of Timothy ever became a believer. There is a reasonable presumption that he did not. Was he a patron of one of the philosophic cults, or a worshiper of false deities? We do not know. We are certain of one thing, that an unpretended faith dwelt in the grandmother as well as the mother of Timothy.

3. Timothy was reared in a pagan environment. He was far removed from the center of Jewish influence, the temple, the priesthood, and the daily liturgy. The children with whom he played and attended school were from heathen homes. He was subjected to all of the superstitions with which the area was rife, and it was one of the worst in Asia Minor.

4. Timothy was subjected to prejudice, probably from both Jews and Greeks. Circumcision was an explosive issue, filled

with opportunities for demonstration of open hostility, and this undoubtedly created a traumatic situation for a growing lad. Even when he was grown and had been converted to Christ, it was necessary for Paul to circumcise him because of the Jews who resided in that region. He would have been barred from synagogues and homes alike if this surgery had not been performed, and even then was no doubt looked at askance because it was not done on the prescribed day.

5. Timothy appears to have been emotional in his own personality. Paul wrote him that he prayed for him both night and day, and eagerly longed to see him. He stated that one reason he was so anxious to visit him was because he knew of the weeping in which Timothy engaged during their separation. Certainly this was a demonstration of tender concern, but it suggests to us that the young man found it difficult to be "a loner," and was deeply affected when absent from the man he respected so highly.

6. He was also weak and sick a good deal of the time. Although one needed a good physique and a healthy body to endure the rigors of travel by land and sea, Timothy was undoubtedly handicapped. Paul writes to advise him to "Stop drinking water, and use a little wine for the sake of your stomach, and to help your frequent illnesses."

Whatever the condition which beset Timothy, we can be certain that it was constantly recurring and chronic, and was either intensified by drinking the water at Ephesus, or induced by it. At the time, wine was recognized as one of the best medicines available to aid digestion and soothe stomach upset. This was before the days of Tums and Di-Gel. The prescription of the apostle helps us to realize the misfortune which beset the young preacher.

7. One hardly needs to read between the lines to realize that Timothy also suffered from times of depression in which he

probably doubted the wisdom of continuing to pursue the work of an evangelist. At such times he allowed the gift of God to be unused and its power to erode away, while he gave way to unnatural fears and unwholesome attitudes.

It is interesting to study the psychology of Paul in snapping him out of his mood and getting him back into the service. Perhaps you will pardon me for mentioning the method employed by which to renew his spirit.

1. The apostle tells Timothy how much he meant to him. He states that he daily thanks God for making it possible for him to come to know him. Paul had much for which to thank God because both he and his forefathers had long since served God with a clear conscience, but in spite of all that had happened, it was a high spot in his life to know Timothy.

2. The faith which operated in Timothy was a rich and priceless heirloom from his mother and grandmother. They had clung to it, cherished it and nourished it, even in a pagan world. And their faith was genuine. It was real. If Timothy failed or washed out, he would break the hearts of those who loved him most. From a child they had taught and prepared him in the sacred scriptures, and he was their hope of keeping the light shining.

3. Paul reminds him of the time when he was ordained to go forth as an evangelist. One who possessed the gift of prophecy had designated Timothy as a potential candidate to further the work of evangelism. When the day came for the local presbyters to lay hands upon him and dedicate him to this holy function, the apostle also laid hands upon him and bestowed an enabling gift. Apparently there was a fervency about Timothy at this time that was beautiful to behold.

4. Paul tells him that the purpose of God's gift was not to produce craven fear in the heart. One who loses confidence and

draws back from his responsibility is not pleasing God by such action, but is unfitting his life for the fulfillment of the divine purpose.

5. Timothy is again told what God provides for one who is completely committed to the divine will. He is made the recipient of inner power which will not desert him in difficult times, nor become depleted by distress. God supplies the power to perform his purpose. One need never shirk back in despondency. If he marches forward at the command of God he will open up the way as he did for Israel.

God provides love. This is the greatest deterrent to discouragement, the dynamic to devotion, and the dedication to daring. Love eliminates fear like the sun burns away the fog, or drives away the night. And he who gives us love also gives us the spirit of self-control. There is no adequate way to translate *sophronismos* into English. William Barclay writes that someone translated it as "the sanity of saintliness."

Certainly by this time we can all see that the letters which Paul wrote to Timothy were simply that— letters of an older preacher to a young one whom he loved, written to encourage, strengthen and fortify him for the difficult work in which he was involved. Paul was not writing "to lay down the law to Timothy," nor to lay down a law for us. He was expressing himself in love when he said, "That is why I send you this reminder to keep at white heat the gift that is in you and which came to you through the laying of my hands upon you; for God did not give us the spirit of craven fear, but of power and love and self-discipline."

I don't want you to get a false impression about Timothy, or conclude that he did not make it, or that he became a wishy-washy, muddle-headed, whining minister of mediocrity. The tremendous lesson to learn from all I have said is that, in spite of his physical, sociological, cultural, natural and temperamental

handicaps, he did not give up. And the apostle paid him high tribute for the victory he won.

Of course, we are liable to credit all of this to the fact that he had received a special gift through imposition of the hands of Paul, and excuse our own laziness and neglect by saying with a deep sigh, that if we had been as fortunate as young Timothy we too might have made the grade, instead of having the grade we made. Many a man lets his teeth decay while bemoaning the fact that he was not born with a silver spoon in his mouth, and any of us should know that a good set of teeth is worth more in the mouth than a good set of spoons.

But I happen to know of a man in our age who was much like Timothy. I learned his story from others in a simple rural area where I held a good many meetings. His father died when he was but a little lad, and the widowed mother was left to depend upon her own efforts and the mercy of the neighbors for survival. The boy, Tom, hired out to work for nearby farmers from the time he was old enough to drive a team of horses. And he seemed to be imbued with the idea that he wanted to become a preacher of the Word.

He read the Bible every spare minute. He memorized so much of it before he got out of the eighth grade that people thought he was developing into a religious fanatic and would "crack up." He grew into the habit of practicing public speaking while riding the cultivator and was subjected to all kinds of merriment and ridicule. When he was in a crowd someone would say, "I hired Tom to plow that ten acres down by the creek, and he can't tell the difference between a cornfield and a mission field. He held a revival up and down the rows and converted six stalks of corn and a hickory sapling. Apparently his message is corny because I could see all of the stalks bending their ears as he went by."

But Tom would not be discouraged, and finally a couple of

men went over to his mother's house one night to talk with him. They told him that they came as friends but they wanted him to know that his obsession was a crazy fantasy, and he ought to give it up, and that everyone was laughing at him behind his back. He was sixteen years old at the time, but instead of giving up he asked the men if they would try and arrange for him to speak at the Sunday morning meeting.

When nothing else would prevail they agreed, and when the time came Tom made a miserable failure. He was nervous, distraught and shaky. He had to give up and sit down after about ten minutes. His subject had completely fled from his memory. The elders told him that he had now demonstrated that he did not have what it took, and asked him to give up the crazy notion. It was then that he asked his mother to move to a distant state and to a city where some of their relatives resided. This they did.

To shorten this narrative let me mention that two years before I came into the area, Tom had been called for a series of gospel meetings. His messages kindled a fire in the hearts of the hearers. The audience grew to such proportions that several hundred stood outside the house to listen. Standing on the same platform where he had made his failure he preached with such power and fervency that people were led to Christ at every service. He immersed more than a hundred persons in two weeks, including most of the grandchildren of the very ones who had advised him to give up the idea that he could preach the gospel.

Now, with your kind indulgence, I want to note with you again the apostolic charge under which the evangelist goes forth into the world to fulfill the purpose of God in his life. It is found in 2 Timothy 4:1, 2. "I charge you in the presence of God and of Jesus Christ who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word, be urgent in season and out of season, convince, rebuke, and exhort, be

unfailing in patience and in teaching."

The greatness and majesty of an action can often be judged by the nature of those in whose presence it is performed and who are called upon to witness it. Frequently the newspapers show a picture of the president of the United States signing into law a bill submitted by the Congress. Generally he is surrounded by a group of dignitaries and high officials, and their presence as witnesses adds dignity and luster to the proceedings.

The charge delivered by Paul, who was an ambassador for Christ, was pronounced in the presence of the Father and the Son, and thus we can be sure that it was given with their approval and sanction. There are three things added about Jesus which are calculated to enforce the charge and increase the solemnity attendant upon it.

1. Jesus is judge of the living and the dead. Those who accept responsibility for any phase of service must do so with the understanding that they will give an account for the manner in which they discharge the task. When Daniel Webster was asked to state the most important thought which ever occurred to him, he replied, "The most important thought I ever had was that of my individual responsibility to God."

2. Jesus is coming again. The evangelist is charged in view of his appearing. Now the word for appearing is an interesting one indeed. It is *epiphaneia*, and this is the word which was used when the Emperor went to visit one of the cities or provinces. It was always a tremendous event, a great holiday filled with pageantry and color. And it necessitated a lot of preparation.

Houses were painted, streets were cleaned, public buildings were decorated, and all of the citizenry attired in the finest clothing possible. The approach of the Emperor was heralded by a trumpet, and when he arrived he bestowed gifts and honors upon the deserving. It was my good fortune to be in North

Ireland just before a visit of the Queen. Everything was carried on in anticipation of this great event, and a state of constant readiness was maintained. This is the way in which we should look forward to the coming of the Son of God.

A number of years ago, in Omaha, a mother had taken her little girl to hear a very famous evangelist, who spoke on that Sunday afternoon on, "The Second Coming of Christ." The mother supposed that her little child had not listened very intently, but as they were walking home, the little girl looked up at her mother, and asked, "Mother is Jesus really coming back again?" "Yes, darling," the mother replied, "he is coming." "Well, is he coming to Omaha?" "Yes, he is coming to Omaha, dear." "Mother, is he coming to our house?" The mother said, "Yes, he is coming to our house, but why do you ask that." The little girl replied, "Well, if he is going to come to our house, we'd better hurry home and get ready for him."

3. Jesus is coming in his kingdom and glory. The first time he came in the form of a slave, but when he comes again it will be as King of kings, supreme in all the universe. I must ever be conscious that the message I carry is not a common message. I am on business for my king. The word I carry is his word.

Then, what does it mean to preach? The answer is simple. The Greek word means "to proclaim as a herald." It may be difficult for us to grasp the significance of this because of our modern inventions for disseminating news. We are conditioned by the printing press, the radio and television. But before there were any of these media, the news was carried and announced by the mouths of men.

Accompanying the armies were fleet-footed runners. It was the duty of these men to carry the tidings of battle to the waiting populace. Often the people gathered on the wall and its ramparts with eyes glued to the horizon, waiting anxiously for sight of the runner with the news of the battle. The most famous

of these in history was no doubt the anonymous Athenian who ran the eighteen miles from the plains of Marathon to Athens with news of the defeat of the Persian army under Darius the Great by the Athenian forces under the celebrated general Miltiades.

These runners were heralds and they were especially welcome when they brought news of victory. Their coming meant that there would be great joy in the city. It was precisely this picture Paul had in mind when he talks about the victory in Jesus which saved the lost race of mankind. "But how are men to call upon him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without a proclaimer? And how can men proclaim unless they are sent? As it is written 'How beautiful are the feet of those who herald good news.'"

Do you consider yourself a herald who has just come through the fire of conflict and been delivered from impending death? Do you feel your heart bursting with the message of deliverance, which you want to make known to those who are still wavering between hope and despair? Are you more concerned with getting through with the good news or with getting your salary on time? Is the comfort of the message of greater priority than your own physical comfort? These are questions which we must face if we are to be heralds of the king.

We are to be urgent in season and out of season. That is simply another way of saying that we must be on the job all of the time. "In season" means when everything seems just right, and "out of season" means when everything seems all wrong. Sometimes when things are stacked against us, God has done the stacking. If we are discouraged and disgruntled, and sitting on the sidelines, the work will lag at the very time that it ought to get going. John Wesley once said, "Get on fire for God, and men will come to see you burn."

Benjamin Franklin wrote in *Poor Richard's Almanac* these words: "The man who does things makes many mistakes, but he never makes the biggest mistake of all— doing nothing." Thomas Edison said: "When everyone else is quitting on a problem, that is the time when I begin." The preacher who moves because he cannot see anything left to do where he is, will not likely do much where he goes. The problem is not with the community but with himself. There is no excuse for a Christian to have "tired blood" as the television commercials label it, for we are operating with the blood of Christ and not with our own.

One who proclaims the word is charged with the solemn responsibility to "reprove, rebuke and exhort." The first carries the idea of conviction, and this necessitates pointing out guilt or sin so plainly and forcibly that one is judged at the bar of his own conscience, and there falls under condemnation. One cannot be faithful to his mission and let a sinner feel at ease in his sin. Nathan convicted David, Daniel convicted Belshazzar, John the Baptist convicted the Pharisees and Sadducees who made the trek out to the place where he was baptizing. More than anything else today our world needs to be brought to repentance. We stress baptism so much that we often immerse those who have not turned from their sin, and we fill the congregation with "incubator babies," who have to be pampered the rest of their lives, and who never grow up in the faith.

To rebuke is to censure and admonish. It is unfortunate that we live in an age which is permissive. When "anything goes," everything does. But we do no man good when we condone his evil. We become his worst enemy while trying to be his friend. Even Paul was forced to ask, "Am I become your enemy by telling you the truth?" No one can faithfully teach all that is found in the letters of the apostles without rebuking evil. Many of these were written for the very purpose of correcting existing ills, and human nature has not changed.

Exhortation is the encouragement to do that which one is

capable of performing. Just as many a gem "of purest ray serene" lies hidden in the earth, never to gladden the heart of man, so many a talent has been undiscovered and the world is the poorer for it.

Sir Walter Scott, in his later years, used to tell how shy and backward he was when a youngster. Upon one occasion, as a mere lad, he was visiting a castle in Scotland, to which the famous poet Robert Burns came. Burns spoke kindly to the boy, and said in departing: "You will be a great man in Scotland, my lad. You have it in you to be a writer." Scott went home and cried all night for joy because of these few words of recognition.

It is possible that Alexander the Great would never have become a world conqueror at all, if it had not been for Clitus, the boyhood friend who encouraged him to press on, and who saved his life at the battle of Granicus. It is a tragic mark against the character of Alexander that he killed his friend, striking him down with the sword in a drunken rage. But I think that it is interesting that the graffiti of ancient Greece, portrayed a friend in the simple drawing of a person, across whose tunic were written the words "Summer and winter." A friend is one who encourages you "in season and out of season."

All of us are aware of how much David depended upon Jonathan, who unselfishly encouraged him to fulfill his destiny as king. And who is there present in this audience, whose own spirit has not been refreshed by reading the words which David penned? I go to Paul for exhortation and comfort as if I had personally known him all my life, or as if he and Tertius lived across the street. And if there come those moments when I wonder about my course or ability to carry on, I go to the divine medicine chest, and read the directions on the prescription as given by Paul, and I am ready to go again.

I am thoroughly convinced that the Good News about Jesus is the message our world needs to hear. I have not one

doubt about its dynamic power. It has changed my life, strengthened my spirit, quelled my fears, and given me a vibrant hope for the future. It is the bread of life when I am hungry, the water of life when I am thirsty, the staff of life when I am weary, and the strength of life when I stumble. God's word is like the cool shadow of a rock in a weary land.

In the cathedral at Dijon, France, there is a great and massive pulpit chiseled from stone. Just beneath it is the figure of an angel sitting. It is beautifully and delicately carved. It is the recording angel, holding a writing tablet in one hand, and in the other a pen poised ready to write. The face of the angel is turned expectantly upward to the pulpit, waiting and ready to record what the preacher says.

I want to remember that the recording angel is always present when I speak, whether in a cathedral or a country-church building, whether in a living-room or an assembly room in a Student Union building on campus. And although I may forget the words that I speak, heaven will not. Some day I will face them again. Every word, and every secret thing, shall be brought into judgment. It is for this reason that it seems appropriate for me to close as Paul closed his first letter to Timothy.

"O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you. Avoid the godless chatter and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge, for by professing it some have missed the mark as regards the faith. Grace be with you."

Three Great Errors

Contents

The restoration was the result of the Second Great Awakening, which was a partial spin-off from the French Revolution, among other historical events. It would require too much time and space to document this, and I will forego the pleasure of doing so. It began primarily with sober and serious Presbyterians with an occasional assist from some Methodists and Baptists, and it began as "a project to unite the Christians in all of the sects," as Alexander Campbell referred to it in 1835.

Actually, it was not "*the* restoration movement" at all, as if it were the only one. It was a restoration movement. It was but one of about sixteen such movements which were launched in those heady days. It was a cultural something, which seemed called for by the times. Some of the movements merged into contemporary sects, but a great many of them died with their emigrant founders. The term "restoration movement" was hardly used by our fathers. They spoke of it as "the current reformation."

This served to distinguish it from the Protestant Reformation which Campbell declared "is proved to have been one of the most splendid eras in the history of the world, and must long be regarded by the philosopher and the philanthropist as one of the most gracious interpositions in behalf of the whole human race."

He continued "We Americans owe our national privileges

and our civil liberties to the Protestant Reformers. They achieved not only an imperishable name for themselves, but a rich legacy for their posterity. When we contrast the present state of the United States with Spanish America, and the condition of the English nation with that of Spain, Portugal and Italy, we begin to appreciate how much we are indebted to the intelligence, faith and courage of Martin Luther and his heroic associates in that glorious reformation."

These men were not unaware of the difference in setting and its effect upon their ideals and purposes. The great contrast with Rome and its political intrigues, its rich hierarchy and its mendicant suppliants, its art forms and statuary, its political structures and pompous liturgy, with the American frontier was everywhere manifest. Too, the stolid German character, demonstrated by both the nobility and peasantry was a far cry from the reckless American who was ever restless and ready to challenge the wilderness.

Thomas Campbell relied upon the freedom and liberty of the new world to spread the good news of a united Church. "Dearly beloved brethren, why should we think it a thing incredible that the Church of Christ, in this highly favored country, should resume that original unity, peace and purity which belong to its constitution, and constitute its glory?" Again, "The favorable opportunity which Divine Providence has put into your hands, in this happy country, for the accomplishment of so great a good, is, in itself, a consideration of no small encouragement."

As a frontier movement among all of the churches some success was recorded. There was an appeal to the simple and unsophisticated mind in the idea that one could be a Christian and a Christian only. It began to appear that sectarianism might be swept from the map in the Western Reserve and in the Missouri Territory where it was not as entrenched as it was in New England. Most of the labor was done and most of the gains

were registered in the new settlements farther to the west. As Thomas Campbell had said, "The cause that we advocate is not our own peculiar cause, nor the cause of any party, considered as such; it is a common cause, the cause of Christ and our brethren of all denominations."

But it was not to continue so. There were a great many obstacles to the achievement of the noble purpose. The very independence which gave it birth seemed to work against its continuance. Men were free enough to begin to unite across the various lines but not free enough to continue to do so. They had not caught the vision of their leaders. They had not dreamed their dreams. Some of them were willing to unite provided their party could be the prominent one. Others were caught up in the developing cults of Mormonism and the Shakers.

Then too, the power of the sectarian spirit was not properly evaluated. Attacks began to be made by the clergy whose creeds had been assailed. The reformers were accused of plotting the overthrow of the Christian faith. Campbell was branded a traitor and a heretic. He was bitterly assaulted in journals and periodicals. His followers were called Campbellites and it was pronounced with a smirk and a sneer. As time went on there were mistakes made. Some of them were grievous. They resulted in the inception of another denomination. It proliferated into a number of different parties. Today these have lost their original goal of the unity of all believers. Yet it appears that there is the beginning of a re-evaluation.

This first little trickle which betokens the melting of the glacier of indifference and unconcern is precious. It betokens the first warming rays of the sun of righteousness have been effective. Whether it can continue to flow until it becomes a mighty river or will be stifled by the deep freeze of partisan coldness is a question. It is the first indication of a breach with the sectarian attitude. In many cases it began with those who had been more exclusive and bitter than their fellows, as it did in

the beginning with Campbell and Stone. This is good because such men have tasted the dregs of the spirit of intolerance and rejected the draught. They will not easily return to it.

I would like to detail three of the many mistakes we have made as a people. In doing so I lay myself open to attack and make myself vulnerable. It seems to me that someone must speak about these matters and I dare not ask another to do what I am unwilling to do for myself. Those who read will probably understand my concern, those who do not will continue to warn against me as if they were thoroughly familiar with what I had said.

BECOMING THE CHURCH

Our gravest error was in allowing the restoration movement to become, in our minds, the church. Nay, even worse and more insulting to the divine intelligence, we made it "the Lord's church," with bold effrontery designating it the "Church of Christ." This immediately changed our aim and goal. We ceased to be a movement and became a monument. A monument marks the accomplishments of the past. People go to it to pay homage to their heroes. We honor the memory of Thomas and Alexander Campbell, Barton Warren Stone and Walter Scott. But where are their successors today? Who is carrying on the work they begun?

Movements are human in origin, but the church is divine. The church did not need to be restored. It had never died. It is impossible for a body to die while its head lives. Movements come and go. They rise and wane. They ebb and flow. But the body goes on forever. When we transmuted the movement into a church we embalmed it. It became rigid and immobile. It must now contend with other "churches" for a place in the sun. The very moment we became a church we automatically inherited rivals, many of them more hoary in age and more respectable

than ourselves.

This meant that what Thomas Campbell referred to as "our dear brethren of all denominations" were no longer our brethren. He declared, "You are all, dear brethren, equally included as the objects of our love and esteem." When we became a church we slammed the door upon them. We became exclusivists of the worst kind. All of our "dear brethren" were now with us. Those who were not with us were not our brethren. The body of Christ now met at a certain location in a certain building, and its chief purpose became to attack all who were not in that location and in that building.

Alexander Campbell, in his debate with Rice, alleged that "We have neither national, provincial or sectarian church. We have many *churches* but no *church*. Nor do we desire a church, in that sense of the word." We have now created a sectarian church. It has other grounds for fellowship than the supreme truth that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. It has other tests of union and communion than the foundation which God has laid. Its devotees have renounced the restoration movement, departed from the one faith, and ceased to be a force for unity. Their hand is against every man who does not conform to them, and every man's hand is against them.

What steps can be taken to remedy the situation. One simple one is to take down the sign "Church of Christ." The New Testament church has no title or name. It is simply the body of Christ, identified by its location. It is a fellowship of the ransomed ones, a community of the saved. The Church of Christ is universally recognized as another sect. It is regarded as in the same category with the Methodist Church, the Baptist Church, or the Presbyterian Church. The idea that it is a haven of rest for every child of God has long been lost. It is now judged by its particularities and peculiarities, and not by its universalities. It is no longer a meetingplace for Christians, but for a certain kind of Christians, subscribing to certain things.

The Church of Christ as it exists today can never unite the Christians in all of the sects. It has forfeited its right to be recognized as the restoration movement. It has lost its aim, forgotten its goal, and has settled down to becoming one of the churches in the community. Yet it could become a rallying-ground for the needy, the seeking, the harassed and driven people of our day. It could do this without giving up a single truth it has ever held. Is it not a logical thing to do or can we afford the price of a lost world, as the cost for our attitude.

TESTS OF BROTHERHOOD

By the very act of proclaiming a movement the church, we created of ourselves a sect. We shut ourselves off from the saved of God who met under another name and sought to praise Him in other places. Many of these were as righteous as ourselves, conscientiously following in all the things of the Word as they saw them. They were caught up in the sectarian web, but were not sectarian.

Our second great error occurred in 1889. It happened at Sand Creek, in Illinois. The aging brick building still stands. It is empty now. The pews are there. But no one has occupied them for years. Wasps and mud-daubers flit about the interior. Squirrels play in the cemetery outside. Sand Creek was the place where the Address and Declaration was read by Daniel Sommer. It was a reverse of the "Declaration and Address" read just eighty years before by Thomas Campbell at Washington, Pennsylvania.

The Sand Creek Declaration mentioned that "Some of the things of which we hereby complain, and against which we protest, are the unlawful methods resorted to in order to raise or get money for religious purposes, namely, that of the church holding festivals of various kinds, in the house of the Lord or elsewhere, demanding sometimes that each shall pay a certain

sum as an admittance fee; the select choir to the virtual, if not the real, abandonment of congregational singing; likewise the man-made society for missionary work, and the one-man imported preacher-pastor to take the oversight of the church."

Loaded language was used in referring to these matters. They were called "Unpleasant, and as we see them vicious things." They were labeled objectionable and unauthorized. Those who endorsed them were called innovators. In conclusion it was said, "We state that we are impelled from a sense of duty to say, that all such that are guilty of teaching, or allowing and practicing the many innovations and corruptions to which we have referred, that after being admonished, and having had sufficient time for reflection, if they do not turn away from such abominations, that we cannot and will not regard them as brethren."

The document was signed by representatives of five Illinois congregations. It was approved by David Lipscomb of the Nashville, Tennessee congregation. It proved to be a Pandora's Box of evils turned loose upon the land. It resulted in divisions, law-suits, claims and counter-claims, which turned the sword of the Spirit against brethren and spilled their fratricidal gore all over the landscape. For generations it perpetuated civil war, hatred and hostility which made of the movement the most bitterly fought and contested territory on the American scene.

It represented the first attempt to "not regard as brethren" those who differed in matters of interpretation and implementation. The few things increased into many. Legalism supplanted love. Motivated by the idea that there was a specific pattern, with all disagreeing as to what it was, the principle of the Sand Creek document became the basis of Church of Christism with its withdrawal of fellowship. Cheap orthodoxy becomes the order of the day and honest dissent paid the penalty.

The first great mistake was disfellowshipping the Christians within the sects. The second great mistake was disfellowshipping the Christians within the restoration movement. Under threat for advocacy or acceptance of anything which differs from the established norm, research stopped and true study ended. The Bible became a book of proof-texts. It was searched not to find what to believe, but to prove what was already believed.

There was no weightier matters of the law, no justice, mercy and faith. Tithes of mint, anise and cummin became as important as trust in Jesus. Indeed, they were used as tests of faith. The attitude toward cups, classes and colleges supplanted the attitude toward the cross of Christ. Clever lawyers twisted the Word of God and manipulated their own ideas for political gain. Passions became inflamed over minor matters, and division occurred over secondary issues.

The kingdom of God became a hodgepodge of things. One could not be a citizen of it who regarded the Sunday School for example, as a matter of indifference. He was forced to take a stand. It was either or else. There was no middle ground. He had to become a partisan to become a Christian. It depended upon what kind of partisan he became as to what kind of Christian he was. To one side he was "loyal," to the other he was "disloyal." If, as the result of concentrated study, he made a change, he was regarded as a convert by one side, and a "turncoat" by the other.

The men who read the document thought they were sincere. They were seeking to protect what they considered as erosion of the faith. Actually what they did was to intrude upon the opinions of men with their own opinions. Not everyone was willing to grant the right of others to legislate for them. The address sowed dragon's teeth. Everyone of them sprang from the earth a soldier in full panoply ready to fight. Debates occurred everywhere. They increased the tensions already existing. Tempers flared. Families divided. Hostility developed.

Peace disappeared from the movement.

CEMENTING THE DIVISION

In 1906 actual division occurred and was recognized. It became a formal thing. The organ was blamed for it, but the division would have occurred if there had been no organ. Men had thought division. It had been preached from the pulpit. It was urged upon men as the will of God. The organ was visible. It could be seen. It was tangible. It could be felt. Men could vent their spleen against it. They did so by literally chopping the offending instrument into bits and throwing the pieces into the backyard. But the rancor existed in human hearts before it was overtly declared.

Slowly there had developed two approaches to interpretation of the Word of God. They were opposed to each other. One said that anything not specifically mentioned in the scriptures was acceptable provided that it did not violate any other scripture. The other said that anything not specifically mentioned in the scriptures was prohibited by the silence of the scriptures. An elaborate argument about the silence was worked out. These two ideas were destined for a crash because they were on a collision course. They met at the point where the instrument was introduced and disaster was the result.

The peculiar thing is that the Bible did not enjoin either of these presuppositions. No one who spoke where the Bible spoke, or remained silent where it was silent, could utter either one. Both had to be siphoned out by the dubious prooftext method which consisted of taking wholly unrelated passages and from them weaving a fabric favorable to a foregone conclusion. Both of them were spectacles donned before reading the scripture. By wearing them only one result could be achieved.

And so occurred once more what Thomas Campbell called "the heinous nature and pernicious tendency of religious

controversy among Christians." Debates were held. History was searched. The revelation of heaven was meticulously gone over with a fine tooth comb. Not one organ was ever debated out. And the reason is that the organ was not the real criminal. We did not divide when the organ was introduced, and we would not unite if it were taken out.

We divided when we quit loving each other as brethren. We will unite again when we resume loving one another. The question is whether we want to win a debate or a brother. "By this will all men know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." Love makes no demands. It assesses no requirements. It stipulates no conditions and requires no proof. It does not say that if you give up this or that I will love you. It loves you where you are and as you are. If you have something which hinders the closer walk you give it up, but you will be loved if you never give it up.

It would be a noble experiment to see what would happen in a community where division has occurred if one side were to continue to love the other as if nothing had happened. This would mean recognition of the division but paying no attention to it, treating it as if it were not there. It would include building no walls, erecting no barriers, and not working in a partisan sense. This is the Christian alternative to division the divine balm to be poured into a gaping wound to begin healing from inside out.

We made an inglorious fracture of the movement when we divided over instrumental music, as we thought. And we will never recover from it until we love one another enough to go back and repair it. With our first mistake we ceased to be a movement, with our second we ceased to be a restoration movement, with our third we ceased to be a force for unity. Ever after, men would ask "If you have discovered the secret for unity, why are you divided?" All of the answers we have stammered out, all of the half-truths we have uttered, all of the

quibbles we have made have not been satisfactory.

This does not mean the adoption of instrumental music. Far from it. It only means the adoption of brethren who use it. It means recognizing them as brothers, and treating them as such. It means weeping with them when they weep, and rejoicing with them when they rejoice. It means letting each person stand or fall to his own master. It means recognition that the kingdom of God is righteousness, peace and joy, which the Holy Spirit gives. And when someone serves Christ in this way, he pleases God and is approved by others.

We need to rise above the grievous mistakes of our fathers. We have done so in the political realm. Could anything have been more horrible than the violence of the Civil War? Could anything have been more awful than the burning, looting, pillaging, murder and rapine which blighted a great part of our nation? Who is there among us today who wants to continue the smoke and conflagration of that frightful conflict. Who wants to perpetuate the holocaust that swept a great part of our glorious land?

Yet the kingdom of heaven is still subject to brutal attack. Brethren war against brethren. Those of the same family lift up the mailed fist against each other. Let us reverse the decisions of yesterday. We have led the world in sordid division. Now let us lead in a return to unity. Let us dedicate our lives to the undoing of the deeds of yesteryear and to the promotion of peace on earth to men of goodwill. "On Zion, God's holy hill, there will be nothing harmful or evil. The land will be as full of the knowledge of the Lord as the seas are full of water." Lord, hasten that day!

Positive and Negative

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According to the definition of the word, perspective means "to view through." It refers to looking beyond the mere form or structure of a thing. Obviously it makes a difference where a man stands as to what he will see when he looks. One who views the world from the bed of a valley will see a totally different scene than one who has ascended from the valley to a surrounding mountain. The color of the lens through which he looks will also affect the impression he receives.

It is undeniable, I think, that the mind-set influences our interpretation of what we see. And that is a composite of many factors. It would be difficult to enumerate all of them. We are the product of our prior training, coupled with all of the things we have done to ourselves. Our prejudices and biases, our areas of conformity and rebellion, our ideals and our adjustments to our failures to achieve them, make of us all individuals whose attitudes differ and whose approach varies. We need to constantly examine ourselves to be sure we do not trample upon reality.

As a body of people we have learned to look askance at anyone and anything that differs from our norm. Like ancient Israel, "We have seen so much, but what does it mean to us? We have ears to hear with, but what have we really heard?" (Isa. 42:20). We are quick to disclaim anything we have not already incorporated as a part of our theological stance. We have doomed ourselves to go along in the same old rut and have

forced ourselves to listen to the same old thing, whether it has any value or not.

While awaiting my train at the station in Nashville, Tennessee, I looked over the array of literature displayed in racks by the various denominations in the city. I selected some reading material from each section as I like to know what others are thinking, and I can learn from all. The "Church of Christ" rack yielded up a booklet bearing the title, "A Church That is Neither Catholic, Protestant, or Jewish." As I read, I thought how typical it was of the negative attitude which is so characteristic of my brethren. Most of their time, money and effort is utilized in telling the world what they are not. Perhaps they have more to boast about in that department.

"Faithfulness" in these days is judged almost solely upon what men disclaim in doctrine or practice. A congregation is deemed "faithful" because it does not support colleges, have a hired minister, contribute to orphan homes, teach in Bible classes, use individual cups, use fermented wine, or expect the Lord Jesus to come before the millennium. It just depends upon what section of the country you may be in, what segment of believers you may be among, or what the latest fight is about. Whatever the current criterion, it will not particularly concern what you believe, but what you do not believe.

A congregation may thus be "faithful" if it is in the doldrums, composed of lazy, indolent, indifferent members, who never talk to a neighbor, distribute a tract, or contribute a cent to support an evangelist in the field, just so long as it does not have a "regular preacher." Its leaders may talk about the Lord's system of mutual ministry, but frequently that is neither mutual nor ministry and the members have to be punched, prodded and programmed before they reluctantly agree to do anything. Yet the church is "faithful" because of what it does not have.

Another congregation may be "faithful" whose members

have never supported one aged widow or cared for a single helpless orphan. The members may spend their Lord's Day afternoons driving about in luxurious limousines, attired in the latest fashions, while there are those who languish in hospitals to whom a visit would be like a cool refreshing draught to the spirit. The aged members are neglected, forgotten, and condemned to eke out their days in little cubicles which their old age assistance will cover. No one thinks of taking them for a drive in the country. But the congregation is "faithful" because it does not support orphan homes or homes for the aged.

Now we could run the entire gamut of factions and fractions and the story would be the same. It is not the life of surrender, consecration and closeness to God which is the mark of faithfulness in these days. It is not what you are but what you are not that counts. We do not minimize the necessity of opposition to all evil in faith or practice. It is essential that we stand against what we conceive of as detrimental to the rule of our King. But real Christianity is a positive force. There is a grave danger that we shall conceive of it as wholly negative and thus live helpless and powerless lives.

The divine power provided by the Holy Spirit is not intended to make us always go in reverse. It is not the power of recession but of progression. It is not condemned to be perpetually neutral. It is described as "the immeasurable greatness of his power in us who believe, according to the working of his great might." It is not the power of retreat but of ongoing. There is no shield for the back of the disciple. He is expected to press the fight and to face the enemy. We are followers of one whose bugle never blew retreat.

I trust that I may be allowed to live until I can see my brethren who love the Christ gain a sufficient degree of courage that they may go anywhere, meet anyone, and contend for the truth under all circumstances. I would like to see them have a knowledge of God's word and the English language, so that they

would unhesitatingly pass out a tract, bearing the title: "A church that is Catholic, and composed of protestants and Jews."

THE CHURCH IS CATHOLIC

The church of God is the only truly Catholic church in the world. The word catholic means "1. Universal or general; affecting mankind as a whole, or affecting what is universal in human interest. 2. Comprehensive in sympathies or understanding, liberal. 3. Of, or pertaining to the church universal, specifically, designating or pertaining to the ancient undivided Christian Church or a church claiming historical continuity from it."

It comes from *kata*, **throughout, and** *holos*, *the whole*. **It consists of all true Christians. There cannot be two "catholic" churches in the same realm at the same time. The church for which our Lord paid with His precious blood embraces within its fold every saved person on the face of this material globe. There is not one such being outside of it. There may be movements within the church as there are within the ocean. But they are not catholic unless they affect every life within the divine fold.**

The church for which Jesus gave his life is catholic as pertains to:

1. *Scope*. **Its ambassadors were told to "Go into** *all the world* **and preach the gospel to** *every creature*" **(Mark 16:15). They were instructed to "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations" (Matthew 28:19). The apostle says "Through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about obedience to the faith for the sake of his name among all the nations" (Romans 1:5). Again, "But is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the nations, according to the command of the eternal God" (Romans 16:26).**

2. *Nationality*. **"In every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness is accepted of Him" (Acts 10:35). "It is the power of God unto salvation to every one who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16). "But glory and honor and peace for every one who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. For God shows no partiality" (Rom. 2:10, 11).**

3. *Social Classes*. **"There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision or uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian,** *bond nor free*" **(Col. 3:11). "Whatever good any one does, he will receive the same again from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free" (Ephesians 6:8).**

4. *Sex*. **"There is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28). "Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God" (1 Cor. 11:11, 12).**

5. *Languages*. **"Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue and people and nation" (Rev. 5:9). "Then I saw another angel flying in midheaven, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and tongue and people" (Rev. 14:6).**

6. *Membership*. **"And the Lord added to their number daily such as were being saved" (Acts 2:47).**

One who claims to be a Christian must either be a member of the catholic church of God, or of a sect. The Greek Catholic Church is neither Catholic nor is it the church of God. The Roman Catholic Church is not the church of God. It is a sect; indeed, the mother of many sects. It is Roman, but it is not Catholic. That which makes it Roman keeps it from being catholic. It cannot be provincial and universal at the same time.

Any person who contends for the church with which he is

affiliated, yet admits that it is possible for people to be saved outside of the circle of communion which he recognizes, is a member of a sect. The church of God, the body of Christ, is not a sect. It contains every redeemed person from every kindred, tongue, people and nation.

As God looks upon it there is one body (Eph. 4:4). There is only one and can never be another. One can no more create another body than he can make another Holy Spirit. The body is a divine organism and not a human organization. Everyone who has been baptized has been baptized into that one body. Not one has ever been made the member of a denomination. Not one has ever been baptized into a party, either the one of which we are members, or any other. "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body— Jews or Greeks, slaves or free— and all were made to drink of one Spirit."

Jesus is not the head of a party. He is the head over all things for the community of believers, which is his body. That church is catholic. It is the fulness of him who fills all in all. It is the body of Christ. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?" Every person who participates in the body and blood of Jesus is a member of that great catholic, universal, cosmic church. "Because there is one loaf, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the same loaf."

We have splintered the body into fragments. We have shattered it into particles. We have ripped it into shreds. Yet as God looks at it, it is one body. Oh, if we but had the vision of God. If we could just see things as He sees them. If we could just view them as He views them. What a difference it would make. We need a physician to heal our wounds. We need a repairer of breaches to mend our breaks. We need to recapture the concept of the catholic church in the very best sense, and labor to let the world see it.

COMPOSED OF PROTESTANTS

A protestant is one who makes or enters a protest. The verb form of "pro" and "testare" is to be a witness. It is a mistake to think that to protest means to be against something. Indeed, the first definition of *protest* is "to assert; affirm, aver." One makes a protestation of faith in the Messiah when he publicly acknowledges him, for the word means the "act of protesting, or solemnly declaring true, existent, or the like; a public avowal." Any person who makes an affirmation or declares a truth is a protestant. One who is not a protestant in any sense would be in a sad condition.

Of course, a protest is also "an expostulation; complaint; objection or remonstrance." One who objects to being designated a protestant proves the designation is correct by his objection. It is not an uncommon thing to see a man *protesting* that he is not a *protestant*. One thing wrong with members of the church of God in these days is that not enough of them are protestants. They accept anything that comes along, submit to being robbed of their rights, privileges and prerogatives without ever raising a protest. No man can be a true follower of the Christ without being a protestant. One reason why our Lord was killed was because he was such a strong protestant.

COMPOSED OF JEWS

Every member of the body of Christ is a real Jew; every real Jew is a member of the body of Christ. This is clearly taught in the New Testament, which also teaches that no one can be a Christian without being circumcised. "In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of flesh in the circumcision of Christ; and you were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead" (Col. 2:11, 12). Only those who are thus circumcised

are real Jews and in covenant relationship with God.

There are those who claim to be Jews outside the body of Christ, just as there are those who contend they are catholic or protestant outside of it, but the first are not real Jews any more than the others are really catholic or truly protestant. "For he is not a real Jew who is one outwardly, nor is true circumcision something external and physical. He is a Jew who is one inwardly, and real circumcision is a matter of the heart, spiritual and not literal" (Rom. 2:28, 29).

Instead of delivering talks on why we are not catholic, protestants, or Jews, why not let the world know we are? I will be happy to see the day come when my brethren will not, through ignorance, surrender perfectly good words to a group who will capitalize and misuse them, but will have the courage to take a positive attitude toward the new covenant religion. I want to see them bold and brave enough to flood the communities with a non-sectarian tract about the church that is catholic, and composed of protestants and real Jews.

The Sheep on the Hills

Contents

The prophet Ezekiel paints a graphic picture of the flock of God scattered among the hills, a prey to lurking beasts, and filled with fear and distress. He attributes their condition to two sources. First, the shepherds who were to feed the flock, fleeced them and fed themselves. Instead of searching for those who were driven away and seeking for those who were lost, they ruled them with force and cruelty.

As a result, God declares that He is against those shepherds and will hold them responsible, even requiring his flock at their hand. It is interesting to note that those who are called shepherds by Ezekiel (34) are called pastors by Jeremiah (23:1, 2). The word is identical in the original Hebrew. Jeremiah writes, "Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture, saith the Lord . . . Ye have scattered my flock and driven them away, and have not visited them; behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings saith the Lord." It is apparent that God's sheep have been scattered by the very leaders to whom they looked for guidance and instruction.

Another factor in the production of the condition is the arrogant, proud and boastful attitude of the fattened members of the flock. They are depicted as pushing and thrusting with side and shoulder, and horning the humble and meek aside, until they are scattered abroad. They are charged, not only with eating the best pasture and drinking the pure water, but also with trampling the remainder into muck and mire, and fouling it

and defiling it for the rest. "And must my sheep eat what you have trodden with your feet, and drink what you have fouled with your feet?" This is an apt portrayal of religion in many places today, where the sheep are exploited by an official board, forced to meet a budget they did not arrange, and subscribe to a program they did not originate. They must knuckle under or get out.

"My sheep wandered through all the mountains and upon every high hill, yea my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did seek or search after them." That is a picture of the flock today. They are wandering through the mountains and hills of sectarianism. They are separated and scattered because of neglect, abuse and cruelty, to which they have been subjected. This is not the will of God. It is his desire that they be together, that there be but one flock and one shepherd. He does not want them divided by partisanship or factionalism but united in love and peace. They were scattered in "a cloudy and dark day" but a brighter day is coming.

God has designed that his sheep shall be brought out from the people, gathered from the countries, and restored to their own estate, where they shall be fed in a good pasture, upon the high mountains of faith and truth. There will the flock be safe under the supervision of one shepherd, the prince of David. They shall have a covenant of peace, and will dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods. None shall make them afraid. They shall know that the Lord is with them and they are His people.

We live in an age of cacophonous sounds of a strident nature. One says, "Lo, here is the Christ," while another says, "There he is." The command of the true shepherd is "Do not believe it." He said, "For false Christs and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, the very elect." The burning question of this day is not where you stand upon some secondary matter, but "What think

ye of Christ." There are scores of things which may be right but they are subservient to the greatest question of the ages. Our eyes must be upon the shepherd, not upon his rod or staff, important though they may be.

Our appeal goes forth to all of the scattered flock wandering over the hills which have been created by men. We would do our humble best to search and seek after every good and honest heart "scattered upon the face of the whole earth." Every person in the whole wide world who possesses such a heart is my brother— either in prospect or reality. They do not all bring forth the same degree of fruit. Some produce thirtyfold. Some produce sixty. A few may produce a hundredfold. But all are God's children and all are my brothers and sisters, for the kingdom of heaven is likened unto them.

Those who have heard and learned, and come unto Christ, believing in Him, and demonstrating their faith by immersion into His death, are the sons of God. Never mind where they are. Do not be concerned about what mountain or hill they wander over. They are His children, and my brothers, wherever they may be wandering as the result of the cloudy and dark days. Those who have not yet been immersed into our dear Lord, because of lack of knowledge, environment or teaching, need only to have the truth brought to bear upon their good and honest hearts, and they will accept it.

The promise of God still obtains. "As a shepherd seeks out his flock when some of his sheep have been scattered abroad, so will I seek out my sheep; and I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness." Clouds obscure the vision. They make it impossible to keep the trail. They conceal the form of the shepherd. Some feel they are following him when they are really going off on a tangent. And thick darkness hides the trail from sight. It is not a matter of arrogant accusation for those who have lost sight of the way under such circumstances. Ours is a rescue mission. We

must find them and guide them home again.

We plead with all who believe in Jesus, and yet are divided from one another, to be no longer content with the meager pasturage upon the hills. The hand of God beckons on to the high mountain where is the good fold. Salvation is not in the hills. It is not the wish of heaven that we should be divided in heart and spirit. If we are content to be, without doing anything tangible to remedy the state, it is proof that we have been betrayed by Satan. Everyone of us should be actively engaged in trying to get people, not to come to us, but to come to Him.

Let us heal the breaches in Zion. Let us repair the walls and set up the gates. Let us restore the good way and walk in it. Our dear Lord does not want those who believe in Him to be split into divers sects. Even small communities are often fractured into Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, Lutheran and Roman Catholic fraternities. Some of these represent the adherence to a certain order; others to a certain ordinance. One signifies the man who gave them being, the other make a point of being both Roman and universal. How it must grieve the heart of God to see such division among these who profess faith in Jesus as the hope of the world.

Those who compose these bodies all affirm emphatically that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. They do not deny a single fact connected with his personal ministry. They are divided over the interpretation they place upon these facts, or their opinions about them. They each demand that every person have the same opinion as do they about the things they have deduced from what Jesus has said. They bind upon the consciences of men things they cannot possibly accept.

But it is true that God loves every one of them. It is true that Jesus died for every one of them. It is true that God wills they should all be one. It is true that Jesus prayed they might be one. Is it true, then, that they can never answer that prayer? Is

there no solution for the problem? Are we doomed to go on until we die in our divided state. Our appeal will never fall with favor upon the ears of those who love the party spirit, regardless of the party to which they are attached. Our appeal is addressed to the good and honest hearts in all parties. Let us arise and return in spirit and in fact to Him who died for us all. Then shall we be a blessing as he has promised, "And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will send down the showers in their season; they shall be showers of blessing."

I want to see the showers of blessing. I want to see the parched earth revived again. I want to see the flowers bloom and the fruits borne. I want to wet my searing lips in the rain from on high. I want to be a partaker of his promise. "And the trees of the field shall yield their fruit, and the earth shall yield its increase, and they shall be secure in their land; and they shall know that I am the Lord, when I brake the bars of their yoke, and deliver them from the hands of those who enslaved them." That is what I crave. It is what I long for. I want to dwell securely where none shall make me afraid.

God has given us a revelation from heaven. It is like the rain and snow which comes down from heaven. It does not return to heaven but waters the earth. It causes it to spring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater. Thus it is with the word which goes forth from His mouth. It will not return unto Him empty, but it will accomplish His purpose. It will prosper in the thing to which He sent it. We have tried to catch that rain in our own cisterns. We have sought to keep others from drinking of it unless they use our dipper.

But it is a divine love letter to the world. It is not to be caught and treasured in a sectarian cistern. If we love its author as we claim to do, let us labor to help fulfill His eternal purpose. Let us seek to unite in Him, and upon the basis He has given. It is later than you think! The world hovers on the brink of despair and destruction. We have but two alternatives. We must convert

the world to Jesus, or the world will commit universal suicide. All that is essential to leading the world to believe in Jesus, is for those in the world who believe in Jesus to become one. This is His own blessed assurance. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for all them also who believe on me through their word; that they may all be one . . . that the world may believe that thou has sent me."

The cost of a divided people is a lost world. Can we afford to pay that tribute to our fractured state. Does any person of reason doubt that if we all became one tonight that the world would be a better place tomorrow? Have we not exported our divisions to places in the world which are not ready to receive them? Each sect sends its own missionaries to reproduce abroad the same kind of institution which sent them forth. Thus, we have not only fractured ourselves into warring clans over here but have set humble native peoples at each other's throats in their home-land and done so in the name of Jesus.

What would be the glorious result of the unity of which we speak? Wars would cease and the rumble of cannons die away. The power of nuclear fission could be directed toward the relief of mankind. The shrieks and groans of dying men upon the battlefields of the earth would be heard no more. The mighty energies of the universe could be expended in the betterment of all mankind. We could safely travel any place upon earth. Prejudice and hate would fade away. The desert would blossom like a rose. We would experience a true brotherhood of man under the benign fatherhood of God. Fellowship based upon mutual sonship would exalt the peoples of the earth.

In the face of such a benign prospect, how pale and insignificant are the doctrines and dogmas of men, the opinions and interpretations which rend the hearts, and set us back into the jungle of passion under the reign of fang and claw. Sectarianism, division, party strife and schism must be dethroned. They cannot be tolerated in a heart in which the

Lord is sanctified. Let us seek the one Lord, the one faith, the one body. Let us come unto Him through the one baptism He has appointed.

What can we do? Those of us who love the Lord more than men, who exalt His revelation above human rationalization, who seek to restore the one body to its primitive perfection, must seek to study together, to investigate, to question that we may know "the Way." Regardless of what party we may now be in, we must seek the ultimate destruction of all parties by merging through mutual acceptance of the truth, into the grand concourse of all saints which will compose the one body.

We must further our aim in love. Nothing that is not of eternal value is great enough to divide the church over here. "Then they that feared the Lord spoke often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name" (Mal. 3:16). To help in my very feeble way, I offer personally to go to any synagogue, cathedral, or church building which I can reach, at home or abroad, and express my views on these issues, and submit to questioning at any length. I will respect those who differ and love their souls. I will patiently listen to their views.

Brighter days are coming. A mighty army of earnest seekers after truth is being raised up all over the earth. Men are beginning to discard the shackles of slavery devised by human agency. The sheep on the hills are lifting their gaze to the high mountain peaks of safety. Their ears are tuned to the sound of the voice of the shepherd. Men are examining their positions by the Book, rather than by the light of tradition. The campfires of the pilgrims can be seen flickering all along the road to Jerusalem.

Let us here issue a word of warning. Let not those who are fortunate enough to have discovered the green pastures first,

devour and tramp the residue with their feet. Let not those who have been drinking of the deep waters foul the pure stream by jealousy and bigotry. It is no time for those who have found certain great and abiding principles "to thrust with side and shoulder, and push the diseased with your horns, till ye have scattered them abroad." Brethren, make room for them. Let them in.

God's sheep are coming home from the hills. There is room on the mountain for every good and honest heart. His house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples. For you shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace. The mountains and the hills before you shall break forth in singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Will that not be a glad day when there will be singing on the hills of Zion?

God has reserved thousands who have not bowed the knee to Baal! Longing eyes are looking upward. Hungry hearts are turned heavenward. The sheep are starting to move toward the shepherd, slowly at first, but with gathering momentum. They have heard the voice of the shepherd again as it echoes among the hills. He has promised to them "within his house and within his walls a monument and a name better than sons and daughters, an everlasting name that will not be cut off." Don't stone them or beat them back with force and with cruelty. Let them come home to the prince of David. They are his sheep, and not ours. We also are His sheep. We are a part of the gathering throng.

The Spirit and Liberty

Contents

Within this tenement of clay called the body, dwells a spirit. God hath "formed the spirit of man within him" (Zec. 12:1). That spirit is the inward man which can be renewed daily, even while the outward man perishes (2 Cor. 4:16). It is strengthened with might by the Holy Spirit (Eph. 3:16). It is the spirit, held captive in the body, which longs and groans for the day of adoption when the body shall have redemption (Rom. 8:23). It is the spirit, confined to an alien realm, which aspires to a higher sphere; which yearns and gropes and reaches out to embrace its creator and to know again the bliss of perfect union which was so rudely shattered by sin.

The spirit of man can expand and grow only in the atmosphere of freedom. It was never created to be dominated, brutalized or made subservient to men. It should never be subject to coercion or undue pressures. Our fleshly parents gave us our physical bodies, and they may chastise them for our social need, but they did not give us our spirits and these are not subject to them. "We have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live?" (Heb. 12:9)

We are accustomed to the anguished cry of parents who have reared their children in a certain sect, that, when they became older they "left the faith." Sometimes it is said that, in their marriage they went to a different church. Did they do,

either? Did the boy renounce his faith in Jesus? Did he turn his back upon the Savior? How could he go to a different church when there is only one? If he still loves Jesus, and recognizes Him as his head, is he not as much a member of the one body as he ever was. Should we not rejoice in his fidelity to our precious Lord rather than whining and making trouble for his family.

Our fathers may set forth principles of religion which they deem to be worthy, and while we are young they may take our bodies to the place where they worship, but in the final analysis we shall be judged, not by what they thought God meant, but by what He said. And here we must reason with God as individuals, for we shall be judged in that manner. Is not the whole purpose of the faith to develop in each of us a certain kind of character? Is it merely the recital of empty liturgy, the grinding out of ritual which may be meaningless to us. And when we see the kind of character or lifestyle in evidence, may we not conclude that Christ is there?

A man and a maid decide to form a union, and in marriage they create a social unit called a home, or family. It was the first such unit created by God and received His blessing. Over this unit the husband and father is the head. But this gives him no rights or prerogatives in the spiritual realm. "He shall cleave to his wife and they shall be *one flesh*." "But he that is joined to the Lord is *one spirit*" (1 Cor. 6:17). "The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband; and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife" (1 Cor. 7:4). To which it may be added that neither one has any jurisdiction over the spirit of the other. "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth" (Rom. 14:4).

In the dim and distant past I have heard parents say, "I would rather follow my daughter to the grave than see her married to a Baptist." Sometimes it was to a member of the Christian Church, although it was generally the Baptists, because there were a lot more of them. This is the bitter and

vitriolic language of sectarianism which intrudes itself into the most sacred relationships of life. It creates barriers and walls where there should be none. It makes a wife unable to respond to the caresses of her husband whom she regards as an alien in spite of his dedication. She fears to give herself fully to him, lest she prove untrue to her father and mother, and the way in which she was reared.

Marriage is too sacred to make it into a tug-of-war to see which one can proselyte the other. It might astound one to realize how many divorces have resulted from the party spirit carried into marriage. It might be still more amazing how many couples have given up on religion, to the utter impoverishment of their children who so desperately need Jesus as a focal point of life. He could be their shadow of a rock in a weary land. Almost every frightful drift in our day has resulted from loosening our grip upon Jesus and the erosion of our faith. It is natural for a ship to drift aimlessly when it has slipped its hawser and is no longer moored to anything solid. We have already paid dearly for that work of the flesh— the party spirit — but we shall pay even more dearly. "They that do such things shall not inherit eternal life."

It should be a source of comfort to us to realize that no one else can control or manipulate our spirits. Many are exercised in conscience, because, as they grow older, they find their thought pattern differing from that of their parents. They suffer inner pangs of chastisement because they are torn between loyalty to the belief of the parents and fidelity toward God. But no parent can form a code of spiritual conviction for his offspring. He can teach what commends itself to him to be the truth, he can exemplify his teaching by his conduct, but he cannot tyrannize the minds and hearts of his children.

Wise parents will teach their children to love truth for truth's sake; they will encourage them as they develop, to seek and search for truth as the chief aim in life. They will make such

amendments and adjustments in their own thinking as are necessary to conform to newly discovered truth, and freely admit their past errors to their children. Thus will be produced emotionally mature children who will not hesitate to adopt truth, regardless of the cost.

It is the truth that makes men free. But for truth to accomplish this it must be free, and not shackled by human dogmatism or political pressure. A veil upon the heart in approaching God's revelation will shut out the light of truth, as effectively as a window shade while drawn will exclude the light of the sun. This is the problem of our Jewish friends today. Their heart is not turned to God, but to a defence of Judaism. They fear to depart from the traditions of their fathers. "But whenever the heart of the nation shall have turned to the Lord, the veil will be withdrawn. Now by 'the Lord' is meant the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, freedom is enjoyed" (2 Cor. 3:16, 17).

Those who are in the Christ have been called unto freedom (Gal. 5:13). They are exhorted to be free men (1 Peter 2:16). Even a slave, whose body was purchased by an earthly master was still free. "For a Christian, if he was a slave when called, is the Lord's freed man" (1 Cor. 7:22). His body still belonged to a master, but his spirit was free in Christ. "You have all been redeemed at infinite cost: *do not become slaves to men***. Where each one stood when he was called, there, brethren, let him still stand—** *close to God***" (1 Cor. 7:24).**

There is the big problem of the ages! Men are not content to let him stand where he stood when he was called. They must mould, shape and alter him to fit their pattern. If he does not do so, they conclude he does not belong to God, because he will not bow to them. After he is called they will work him over, and make him conform to their pattern— Baptist, Methodist, Lutheran, Presbyterian— or dare I say it? What is the answer to all of this. It is the words of scripture, *"Do not become slaves to*

men— stand close to Christ."

Ever since the day Christ set men free, there has been a constant struggle to maintain that freedom. In a less enlightened era, the rope, the stake, the cross, the rack, and the whip were employed to torture the bodies of men to bring their consciences and opinions in line with the orthodox religious views which prevailed. In these days men employ more exquisite means of torture, such as ridicule, malignant whispering, misrepresentation, lying and boycott. The same spirit which lighted the fires of Smithfield, and prompted the Spanish Inquisition, motivated the "powers that be" at Freed-Hardeman College to arrest Leroy Garrett and cast him into a filthy jail cell, because he would not conform. He was treated as all dissenters are treated when they cannot be answered.

But we cannot bring the hearts of men into subjection by force or tyranny. Even atheistic communism learned that lesson in Hungary! We are limited in our attempts to change the minds of men, by the very nature of Christianity, to reason and persuasion. Christ's spirit must be equally dear and honored, no matter where it is manifested. To confine God's love or his good Spirit to any party, sect, or name, is to sin against the fundamental law of the Kingdom of God. It is to break that living bond with Christ's universal church which is one of our chief helps to perfection.

Charity and sincerity are characteristics of the true religion and it must utterly disown bitterness and hypocrisy. These things must not once be named among us. They are unworthy of Jesus and unworthy of His followers. These are the weapons in the arsenal of false and vain religion, which must deceive where it cannot persuade, and force where it cannot deceive. Of what good are abuse, ranting, cavilling and misrepresentation? Can we adjust the hearts of men with a wrench as we would tighten a resistant lug or bolt? Can we use the thumbscrew on the mental processes and force them into a

certain mode of thought.

Is not an error in thinking a species of intellectual lameness? Will such lameness in another hurt me any more than if he had a crooked leg or a deformed arm? Will a wild opinion do me any more injury than a wild look out of his eye? Why should I become so enraged or provoked by his internal defects any more than his external ones? Shall I try to force every cripple I meet to walk as I do, by twisting his deformed leg, or shall I not rather lead him to the physician and surgeon of my acquaintance who can straighten the crooked member? And how shall I regard him during the straightening process— with sympathy and charity, or as an object of my spite and ridicule?

I must maintain the dignity of every man's spirit. To do otherwise is to reflect against me and not against him. I cannot force another to grovel and kneel before me without first losing my own dignity. I must defend his right to think, reason and act for himself, or establish the principle by which I will lose my own right to do so. If I fail to see in my enemy the image of God, though defiled and shattered, I shall fail to restore myself to that image. One who is egotistic, proud, arrogant, conceited and boastful, and who feels that God belongs exclusively to him, reveals he does not yet belong to God.

These are the sins I fain

Would have Thee take away;

Malice and cold disdain,

Hot anger, sullen hate,

Scorn of the lowly, envy of the great,

And discontent that casts a shadow gray

On all the brightness of the common day.

Wild Grapes

Contents

Have you ever read the song of the vineyard by Isaiah (5:1-7). It is a portrayal of God's disappointment with his people. It demonstrates how little esteemed are the blessings which heaven bestows. The Lord planted his vineyard in a fertile hillside. He fenced it for protection; gathered out the stones, thus removing obstacles and impediments; planted it with the choicest vines; constructed a tower for guarding it; and made a winepress in anticipation of the fruit. But when the time of vintage arrived it consisted of bitter and acrid wild grapes.

The vineyard was the house of Israel. The men of Judah were the pleasant plants. From them God expected to glean a harvest of justice and righteousness. Instead he received only oppression and strife. The lament of the husbandman is thus recorded: "What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?"

God's great disillusionment with his people is aptly portrayed in Psalm 80, where David makes a statement and asks him questions. God brought a vine out of Egypt. He drove out the nations and planted it. He cleared the ground for it, and it took deep root and overspread the land. The mountains were covered with its shade. The mighty cedars were protected under its branches. Then the question is asked why its walls were broken down so that even the casual pedestrian could pluck its fruit. The boar from the field ravaged it and all that move in the

field feed on it.

Now for the application. After the congregation of God was given two great wings like an eagle, and fled into the wilderness, to be nourished by God in the secret recesses of the heart for more than twelve centuries, the time came when under the intrepid leadership of Wycliffe, Tyndale, Luther and Huss, as well as other noble souls who loved not their lives unto death, the veil which had eclipsed the face of truth was slowly lifted. As the word of God began to have free circulation, however, men followed leaders and thinkers of great ability, who sought to codify their interpretations and make them the basis of fellowship and salvation. Thus the work of the reformers crystallized in the formation of a group of intolerant schismatic sects, the adherents of which battled against each other with a fury unsurpassed by even the papal dogmatists.

Then, after the commencement of the nineteenth century, and in the midst of the Second Great Awakening, began a movement which seemed destined to sweep the world for Christ. It was launched by men of deep conviction who were affiliated with various sects. It did not begin in America. The fire first burned in the bosoms of honest individuals in Ireland and Scotland. But it was in this new land where there was no establishment of religion, where men were reaching, grasping, seeking and searching for new homes, new fortunes and liberty, that a fertile hillside was created for planting the new reformation vineyard. Here where men were free to think, free to speak, free to act, to question, challenge and dispute, it seemed that providence had combined her talents to provide the proper setting for the great drama of the ages.

The choicest vines were planted. Persons of noble character, high ideals and brilliant intellects, abandoning the parties of which they were members, resolved to be no longer partisan defenders, but to use their talents and fortunes to advance the cause of the absent King to whom they declared

allegiance. They did not seek to unChristianize others. They recognized all truth regardless of who held it; they rejoiced that Christ was preached regardless of who proclaimed Him. They opposed error but loved all men; they sought to maintain even the human dignity of an opponent. They did not "stoop to conquer."

It was not their idea to plant another church. Instead, men of various sects formed themselves into "a religious association under the denomination of the Christian Association of Washington, for the sole purpose of promoting simple evangelical Christianity, free from all mixture of human opinions and inventions of men." They were chiefly Presbyterian, but were joined by some Methodists and a few Baptists. One could still worship where he was affiliated and remain a member of the association.

Article IV of their constitution declared, "That this Society by no means considers itself a Church, nor does at all assume to itself the powers peculiar to such a society; nor do the members, as such, consider themselves as standing connected in that relation; nor as at all associated for the peculiar purposes of Church association; but merely as voluntary advocates for Church reformation; and as possessing the powers common to all individuals, who may please to associate in a peaceable and orderly manner, for any lawful purpose, namely the disposal of their time, counsel and property, as they may see cause."

To further their "lawful purpose" they composed a "Declaration and Address" to share their thinking with "all that love our Lord Jesus Christ, in sincerity, throughout all the Churches." One part of it said, "Dearly beloved brethren, why should we deem it a thing incredible that the Church of Christ, in this highly favored country, should resume that original unity, peace, and purity which belong to its constitution, and constitute its glory? Or, is there anything that can justly be deemed necessary for this desirable purpose, both to conform to the

model and practice of the primitive Church, expressly exhibited in the New Testament? Whatever alterations this might produce in any or in all of the Churches, should, we think neither be deemed inadmissible. Surely such alteration would be every way for the better, and not for the worse, unless we should suppose the divinely inspired rule to be faulty, or defective. Were we, then, in our Church constitutions and managements, to exhibit a complete conformity to the apostolic Church, would we not be, in that respect, as perfect as Christ intended we should be? And should not this suffice us?"

Seldom did two of them agree in all points. They held widely divergent views as to the work of the Spirit, the functions of grace, the nature of man, the subject of future judgment and the problem of eternal punishment. But they conceived that Christ was greater than their personal views, and they tolerated the divergencies of opinion, believing that to make of an opinion a test of fellowship, would only create two diverse parties, and they had too recently fled from partisan division to the city of refuge.

They built into their Declaration and Address the necessary safeguards to prevent division. Consider this: "That although inferences and deductions from scriptural premises, when fairly inferred, may be truly called the doctrine of God's holy word, yet are they not formally binding upon the consciences of Christians further than they perceive the connection, and evidently see that they are so; for their faith must not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power and veracity of God. Therefore, no such deductions can be made terms of communion, but do properly belong to the after and progressive edification of the Church. Hence, it is evident that no such deductions or inferential truths ought to have any place in the Church's confession."

In a practical sense, it was observed by Alexander Campbell: "But men cannot give up their opinions, and

therefore, they can never unite, says one. We do not ask them to give up their opinions:— we ask them only not to impose them upon others. Let them hold their opinions, but let them hold them as private property. The faith is public property; opinions are, and always have been private property. Men have foolishly attempted to make the deductions of some great minds the common measure of all Christians. Hence the deductions of a Luther, and a Calvin, and a Wesley, have been the rule and measure of all who coalesce under the names of these leaders. It is cruel to excommunicate a man because of the imbecility of his intellect."

It was not long until there came an opportunity to apply the principle to see if it would work. Aylette Raines, who preached that all men would be eventually restored without exception, applied for membership in the Association which also sheltered the Campbells. Thomas and Alexander Campbell were present at the meeting where Jacob Orsborne brought the matter formally before the gathering and asked that it be definitely and finally settled. Thomas Campbell, after expressing profound regret that such matters would have to be introduced, said: "Brother Raines has been with me the last several months and we have fully unbosomed ourselves to each other. He is philosophically a Restorationist and I am a Calvinist, but notwithstanding this difference between us, I would put my right hand into the fire and have it burned off, before I would hold up my hands against him. And from all I know of Brother Raines, if I were Paul, I would have him in preference to any young man of my acquaintance, to be my Timothy."

The very sound of such a plea fell like welcome rain upon a parched earth. The religious world was jaded and jaundiced. The petty bickerings and fierce antagonisms of the sectarian world had driven many to skepticism and infidelity. The plea that all who recognized the sovereignty of Jesus could be one in him, and no one surrender any truth he ever held, was one to rally the thinking hearts. It appeared that simple as Christianity.

Some believed it was a millennial harbinger.

What happened to the powerful movement to restore the ancient order and to unite all believers in the Christ? As it was in the days of Isaiah, it has come to pass again. In spite of all that heaven did in behalf of the vineyard, it is producing wild grapes, bitter, acrid, poisonous with venom and hate. The noble effort of the giants of yesteryear has been diverted by men of pygmy stature into an excuse for civil and fratricidal strife which makes it a laughingstock to the world. Those who know it best make sport of it. The restoration movement which proposed to unite all in Christ is now shattered into more than two dozen warring factions, each of which proclaims itself to be the bride of the Messiah, and all of which are contesting the provisions of His will before the court of human opinion.

That you may savor just how wild are the grapes we have produced, let us mention but a case or two by way of illustration. The Son of God left the community of saints a feast of fellowship, by which the citizens are to proclaim His death until He has returned. All who are sealed unto God are to participate in unity of purpose. "We are all one bread and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread." But the children have fallen out with each other and because the Lord has delayed His coming, they have taken to smiting each other. The very expression of unity and fellowship of the one body have been made one of the most frightful causes of division and disfellowship.

Think of it! Men have divided over whether the bread which represents his body shall be leavened or unleavened; whether it should be prepared with oil or some other ingredient; whether it should be passed whole; whether it should be made of wheat or some other grain. Congregations have actually been rent asunder over whether the fruit of the vine should be fermented or not; whether it should be passed in one container, several, or many. Here is the spirit of intolerance and the love

for factionism gone to seed. And when factionism exists in the hearts of the members, it does not make any difference how they partake of the elements — *it is not the Lord's Supper*. When a congregation is filled with the party spirit, until the members eye each other with disdain and suspicion, they need not be concerned about how they prepare or pass the emblems for they are an abomination unto God when they pretend to communion with him and hate their brethren.

The one who died in agony for my sins has bound me to eat the bread and drink the cup in memory of him until he comes. When I sit down at the table with the saints, I shall not scrutinize or examine the bread to see if it is leavened or unleavened, or made with oil or not. I am not told to examine the bread. I am told to examine myself that my motive in participating be without reproach. I shall not concern myself with how it is broken and how it is passed. I am told to eat the bread and thus share in his death. Regardless of the grain from which the flour was made, whether there is yeast in it or not, it is bread, sanctified by the giving of thanks to its purpose and I shall seek to discern the Lord's body, rather than trying to discern what my brethren are thinking.

I know that factionalism is sinful! **It is a work of the flesh. To build a party around a type of bread, or a manner of presenting it is a sin! A man may have scruples as to the type of bread. I should recognize them in the community of saints, and out of love should determine to keep from offense of my brother. It is a sin for either of us to build a party so that the body will be rent into a "leavened party" and an "unleavened party." And that goes for the cup of the Lord. There is no such thing in Christ as "multiple cups churches" and "one-cuppers." These terms represent divisions created by men.**

They are semantical, divisions of vernacular, and they belong to the vocabulary of narrow, intolerant, factional spirits. They are disgraceful and sinful. Those who love the Lord should

purify their hearts of the attitude which creates such unscriptural verbiage so that they may purge their tongues and pens of such language. We are disappointing God with our wild grapes of hate, bitterness and the party spirit. God help us to rise above the schisms we have created.

Fear of Love

Contents

It was while he was sitting on the hill that day, with his disciples gathered around, that Jesus opened his mouth and taught them. What he was saying seemed almost casual. Too casual. Yet those who heard and took it to heart would never be the same again. Not with the second mile lifestyle! But it was the freewheeling, uninhibited and unrestricted love which made the real difference. This put the finger on the Grade A, number one problem of the whole world. It created for us an opportunity to compromise and try to cover up by explaining away what He said, so that the guilt of the excuse actually became greater than our frightful tampering with his teaching.

"For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?" That separates the men from the boys. It also separates the righteous from the wicked. Of course there is nothing wrong with loving those who love you. That isn't the point. It's loving *only* those who love you, when there are a lot more people in the world who need loving and need it desperately. Some of them are quite loveless. Some are real problems— sticky problems. Even tax collectors, social outcasts shunned by polite society, and given the brush-off by nice people, love those who love them. No one can file claim for a reward for acting like a tax collector.

"And if you salute only your brethren, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?" What about one who does not even want to salute his brethren? One

who slips out of the side door or goes down the other side of the street, to keep from meeting and greeting certain ones? It is implied that disciples of Jesus should do more than others. They should be more friendly, more hospitable, more generous, and more kind. They should be less egotistical, less selfish. Merely coming up to the standard of the Gentiles is not enough. To greet only your brethren is still to fall short. It is to miss the mark! The love that Jesus commanded is as wide as the ocean, as boundless as eternity, and as high as the heavens. It is not peanut-sized, and is bigger than life.

In the face of such teaching all else becomes secondary. Differences in social standing, dress style, ethnic background, race, all fade into oblivion. The things which loom so great in our sight, which become such frightful barriers to fraternization are swept away by Him who taught us to love the evil and the good man, to become children of the Father which is in heaven. Every person on earth needs to be loved and appreciated. Everyone needs to be shown courtesy, be given a greeting, and be warmly received.

We live in an age of frustration, disappointment, and discouragement. In a land of plenty men are not satisfied; living in luxury and physical comfort they are not at ease. Our educational institutions are filled to overflowing, but so are our courts for juvenile criminals. In spite of the numerous organizations dedicated to mental hygiene and social welfare, there are more neurotics and insane than at any time in our history. A symptom of our times is found in the tremendous upsurge of publications dealing with how to attain peace of mind, and the variety of suggestions is so great, and often so contradictory, as to upset the minds of some who were relatively at peace. The manufacturers of sedatives, tranquillizing drugs and barbiturates are having a field day. America has one big headache and hangover. She is paying the price for insecurity.

In this state of crisis what contributions are being made to

the welfare of humanity by believers in the Messiah? When He came personally into the world it was in much the same state as now, except that wars had been ended by the sway of a universal empire. The very extremity of man was an opportunity for God. The sun of righteousness beamed brighter because of the darkness of slavery, corruption, degradation, immorality and suicide of the world. If ever Christianity should be able to exhibit itself to the greatest advantage, it is under such conditions as presently obtain. Instead, the nominal disciples of the Master, seem actually to be enlarging the problem rather than providing a solution. The moral defections of those reared under Christian influence, the nervous and mental breakdowns suffered, constitute an alarming barometer of unhealthful attitudes.

It is high time that we awake out of sleep! The expenditure of effort to promote factionism and hate will take its toll of wrecked minds and sick bodies as certainly as we now live. Hate and fear are toxic poisons. They will kill as certainly as arsenic or strychnine! Many of my own brethren are the most unhappy people on the earth today. They are gloomy, morose, and despondent. They are fearful and unbelieving! They are worried and scared! They are spiritually sick! Many who put on an outward show of gay spirits are troubled with worries, jealousy and envy. They cannot save the world, because they have nothing real to offer it. What would be the gain for men to leave the world where they have been fighting their enemies to come in the church and start fighting their brethren?

Why is it that Christianity does not arouse the vibrant passions, kindle and enflame the spirit, and surcharge men with the thrill and joy that the first believers experienced? It is because men persevere in right actions and service to others, merely through force of habit, or because of social consciousness, or to escape from the brooding thoughts engendered by an imperious conscience. It is the lack of a guiding principle which poisons the springs of happiness in

action, and makes life dull and spiritless.

The guiding principle of Christianity is *love!* But it is not love for a particular race, nationality, faction, congregation, segment, or group. It is love for mankind not for a certain kind of man. To be children of God implies more than entering into a relationship with God; it entails the responsibility of growing Godlike in character. But "God is love!" The expression of that love was universal, "God so loved *the world*." God had wisdom and power, but we are not told that God is wisdom and power. His was a divine philanthropy. He loved men because they were men, made in his image. "But after that the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us . . ." (Titus 3:4, 5).

It is an amazing thing that under the guise of religion we are being taught today to *not love men!* The human heart was made to love. But it cannot retain a vacuum. If love is educated out of it, hate will rush in to fill it. Love is the most powerful, vital and active force in the universe. It is world-shaking and revolutionary. Nothing can stand before the application of its full potential. But a universal love for mankind is designated sentimentality, it is ridiculed, scoffed at, belittled even by those who profess to be children of that God who is love.

We are urged to love our group, our race, our church our nationality, our sect. We are afraid to love all men. To do so will upset our "little world" of security. It will make us vulnerable. We will be turned out of our little nest we have woven about ourselves. The churches of our land are employed to foster prejudice and animosity "in the name of Christ." We are taught to have nothing to do with Catholics, Presbyterians, Baptists, Jews, Moslems, Buddhists or Negroes. All of these are caught up in the human predicament. Each one is treading a path toward the grave.

God loves everyone of these. He sent His Son to die for them. The Son came among those who hated him. He ate with publicans and sinners. He visited in the homes of Pharisees. He touched lepers and the unclean. He forgave the woman caught in the very act of adultery. But we are told not to visit people who differ with us. We are instructed to keep away from them. They are not "faithful." We are! So our physicians are ministering to "the well." We have no sick among us. We do not really love the spiritually sick. If you want our love and service, you will have to get well. You must not be a problem.

Have you ever heard our brethren try to explain Matthew 5:43-48? Then, have you ever watched them try to put it into practice?

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you, *that you may be the children of your Father which is in heaven.*" **Love! Bless! Do good! Only by this means can you be the children of God. Jesus came to reveal God as a "servant-God." When the apostles were arguing heatedly about who would be the greatest in the Kingdom, Jesus arose from supper and girded himself with a towel and washed their feet. He accepted the role of a servant.**

The world of mankind is divided into friend or foe as respects relationship to each of us. Every person I meet falls in one or the other of these categories. There are some who love us and some who hate us. There are some who bless us and others who curse us. But both are men and if we love mankind as such, we will have no problem of loving the various categories within the human realm. God made us men, but we have made various things of ourselves. We should love men because God made them, and in spite of what they have made of themselves.

Celsus, who was a bitter critic of the early Christians, and the target of apologies written by Origen, said, "These Christians love each other even before they are acquainted." If I am a true child of my Father, I shall desire and yearn for every man to be my brother. Man was created in God's image, and in whatever respect he has lost that image I must help him repair or regain it. He did not shatter that image because he was a Jew, a Negro, or a Japanese. Sin antedated the advent of racial differences. In the attempt to help one regain the spiritual image of God, I am not to see him as a Jew, Japanese, or Negro, but as man. "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him."

One of Jimmy Dolittle's flyers after spending many months in a dirty prison camp, where he was brutalized, said: "They were ignorant and mean, but we thought there was some good in them. The only way to develop that goodness was by understanding and education— not by brutally mistreating them as they did us. You can smile if you want to, but it made sense to me in that prison camp, and it still does. So I am going to a missionary school for training, and then I am going to return to Japan and spend the rest of my life there, teaching the importance of love among men."

Henry W. Shaw said, "Love looks through a telescope, envy through a microscope." To restrict our love to those who agree with us on some points of religion, is to deny at once the very basic element of Christianity, the equal and infinite value of every human soul. To love all men is actually looked upon as a sign of weakness. The truth is that it takes a strong man to really love his enemies. Weak men hate, despise and feel envy. Cowards are jealous, embittered and distrustful. Love makes one vulnerable. It exposes his very being to exploitation. When Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," he was meek, but he was not weak.

Those who are afraid to love all, may actually love no one.

It is observable that those who cannot love all men, end up by disliking most men. Those who would restrict their love to their own brethren, do not even love those brethren, and will backbite, undermine and seek to destroy them. It is amazing that through the years those who have not learned to love, and who censure a deep affection for others than those with whom they associate, will divide those associates, and soon will not love even a part of them.

Tertullian was the first important Christian writer in Latin. He was born in Carthage, the son of a Roman centurion. He studied law and actually practiced in Rome. It was while there that he became a convert to the faith. In his De Oratione he wrote. "Do we suppose that we can approach the god of peace without being ourselves men of peace? Can we ask for forgiveness of sin with our own hearts full of hatred? How can the Father who condemns anger, receive us if he sees us full of spleen against our brother? It is not only anger that the Christian man should abjure, but everything that may hinder his prayers. He should breathe a spirit in harmony with him into whose presence he comes. The God whose spirit is holiness and joy and liberty, cannot receive a soul defiled, angry, or enslaved. Opposites cannot meet, without sympathy, no relation is possible."

Our problem is not so much of having love dwell in us, as it is of our dwelling in love, as a state. God who made all men, cannot live in a heart that hates any man. "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." Dwelling in love means that it forms the world in which the Christian abides. He eats love, drinks it and breathes it. He has no life aside from love. No man can say he is like God whose love is partisan, national or racial. "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world." Many bold blatant race-haters will be sniveling cowards in the day of judgment. There can be no boldness when they are stripped naked and are seen as they

truly are.

Paul begins with man and his misery. He talks about him in his wretchedness. He speaks of him under condemnation. But John begins with God and His perfection. God is the Absolute Being. He is the Great I Am, whom no eye hath seen or can see. All perfection dwells in Him. He is at once life, light and love. He is the inexhaustible source of life the sole principle of everything that is. John gives us a concrete notion of His moral goodness when He says that God is love. Love is not only a manifestation of His being. It is His very essence.

Love is so assuredly the absolute truth, that he who loveth is of the truth. When the inspired record says, "Hereby we know that we are of the truth" it is because the preceding verse says, "Let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth." When love is reduced to its essence it is truth, and that truth in the absolute is a person. It is God. How silly it is for feeble man whose mind can only comprehend so much to say there is no absolute truth. How foolish it is for him to try and walk as if that were so and he was left to guide himself without chart or compass.

Truth is all that God is. To be of the truth is to be born of God, to possess Him, to be what he is. He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him. "We know that we have crossed the frontier from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death." Every person on this earth who is born of God and knows God is my brother. If I allow sectarian walls to be built and separate me from him I am a murderer and there is no eternal life abiding in me. I must seek out, search out and recognize all who are the children of God and I must love them, or I will suffer the fate of those who do not confess Him. "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God."

The lever which will move the world to Christ is love.

Regardless of how pure your doctrine will be, it will repel, instead of compel, when set forth in bigotry, intolerance and animosity. Even though you may divest yourself of everything, sell all your possessions and distribute them to the poor, it will avail nothing without love. If you consign your body to the flames and allow persecutors to fasten you to the stake and reduce your mortal frame to ashes, and have not love, it will only be burning flesh unless it is done in love for Him "who loved us and gave Himself for us." No one can be forced to accept Jesus Christ. You cannot drive men nor compel them. You cannot argue nor debate them into the new relationship which is eternal life.

The real test of faith in the Christ is the reformation worked in your own life. "For we ourselves also were at one time foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another." We must learn to see ourselves thus. We must quit trying to make it appear that we were guiltless and admit our guilt. We must make it apparent to all that we have changed. We have heard the call of the shepherd. We have heard the voice of our Lord. Now we have become associates of the Father and the Son, purveyors of love unlimited.

Jeremy Taylor said, "Love is the greatest thing that God can give us, for himself is love; and it is the greatest thing we can give to God, for it will also give ourselves, and carry with it all that is ours. The apostle calls it the bond of perfection; it is the old, the new, and the great commandment and all of the commandments for it is the fulfilling of the whole law. It does the work of all the other graces without any instrument but its own immediate virtue."

Waging Peace

Contents

The word for peace in the old covenant scriptures is *shalom*. It literally means "wholeness." It is the original used in Joshua 8:30, 31. "Then Joshua built an altar unto the Lord God of Israel in mount Ebal. As Moses the servant of the Lord commanded the children of Israel, as it is commanded in the book of the Law of Moses, an altar of *whole stones*, over which no man hath lift up any iron; and they offered thereon burnt offerings unto the Lord, and sacrificed peace offerings." The stones were *shalom*, because they were unhewn. They remained whole as in their natural state.

It was used in Nehemiah 6:15 where the wall was completed. "So the wall was *finished* in the twenty and fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty and two days." To finish means to make whole. In the Septuagint Version *shalom* is often rendered *soteria*, salvation which means "to restore to wholeness." The terms saved and made whole are used interchangeably in the new covenant scriptures. "And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace" (Luke 7:50). "And he said unto her, "Daughter, be of good comfort, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace" (Luke 8:48).

Sin has shattered the personality. It has fragmented man. It is as if a beautiful vase had been struck with a rock or other foreign object and left in pieces. Then someone comes and with the eye and hand of a master craftsman puts the pieces together again and restores the vase to its former state. The vase cannot

save itself. It has to be saved. It is dependent upon a power from without. The intimate relationship between peace and salvation is important to any proper understanding of our trust in God.

In the revelation of God peace seldom is used to describe what happens with the cessation of hostilities or the signing of a truce. It is not mere absence of war. It's lack is characterized by a breakdown of personal relationships with Jesus. "For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household." These are strong ties by nature. Anything which disrupts them must also be powerful. One of the proofs of the magnetic power of Jesus is his effect upon the natural ties of the flesh. He transcends all such. "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me."

Peace is the restoration of those broken relationships through Jesus. Just as the relationships of life break down because of attitudes toward Jesus so they are restored by an attitude toward Him. "There is no peace, saith the Lord unto the wicked" (Isa. 48:22). His very coming was announced by "a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace toward men of goodwill." He said, "These things have I spoken unto you, that *in me* **ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).**

Peter declared to the household of Cornelius that "the word of God was sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace *by Jesus Christ* **(he is Lord of all)" (Acts 10:36). Our peace is not a written agreement. It is not a signed document. It is not a creedal statement. It is not a book of ethical precepts or legal commandments. It is a person, a divine person who came to share the lot of us all. "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between**

us" (Eph. 2:14). He did not demand that the circumcised become uncircumcised. He did not demand that the uncircumcised become circumcised. He simply removed the wall between— *so making peace!*

Jesus is the great wall-wrecker between men. Just as he removed what seemed to be an insuperable wall between Jew and Gentile, so he labors to remove every wall between the believers today. As he used the cross then, so he uses it now. It was by the cross that he reconciled two divergent peoples unto God in one body. It is by the same instrument that he effects the same thing in our day. As men cease to emphasize their opinions and interpretations and exalt the cross of Jesus they see their differences disappear. No one can exalt an opinion or a man unless he denigrates Jesus, or places him in an inferior role.

Those who were sometimes afar off were made nigh by the blood of Christ. It was not by adoption of a rite which had no relevance in Christ. At the same time the blood made us near it wiped out everything which alienated and made us afar off. It purged away our alienation. We became fitly framed *together.* **We were builded** *together.* **It is that togetherness we are to keep in the bond of peace. To break it up would nullify the work of the cross. It would count the blood of the covenant wherewith we were sanctified an unholy thing.**

Peace within begins with our justification. And justification means to declare one sinless and to treat him thus. It does not mean that he is sinless, for no man could ever qualify. But God, by His abundant grace, can reckon us as such, and do so freely, for the scripture says "we are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:24). And the ground of our justification is faith, absolute unresolved trust in the merit of His blood. This is "the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all who believe" (Rom. 3:22).

One can never know that absolute and perfect peace within as long as he has a conscience laden with guilt. With remorse for his past sins gnawing away at him, internally, with constant uneasiness as to whether he has been forgiven, with the fear of death before his eyes, he will not only chastise himself within, but will lash out at others about him. He will be of all men most miserable. He will isolate himself from his best friends and make enemies of those who love him. All of the troubles, all of the aches and pains for the body of Christ have been caused by those who did not believe they were justified, and who try to project their guilt toward others.

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." Man is aware of the fact that he is a sinner. As such, he is drawn by the lusts of the flesh. He fulfills all the desires of the flesh and of the mind. He is a child of wrath. He is an enemy of God and alienated from Him. In this frightful state God, who is rich in mercy and filled with great love, lets down a rope which man can grasp, and he is raised up from an otherwise hopeless condition. He must be reconciled to God, and the death of His Son makes this possible. By faith in that tremendous act of history, the most momentous thing which has ever occurred in the annals of this world, man is restored to a proper relationship with God.

He becomes a part of the new humanity. He is a new creation. Old things pass away. All things become new. He is at peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. He stands in the grace of God. He rejoices in the hope of the glory of God. And everything falls into proper perspective. Tribulations, patience, experience, hope. He is dead to the past in Christ. He lives only in Jesus. He has no time for anger, wrath and malice. Hatred is foreign to his new way of existence. He is delivered from plotting the downfall of others.

The word *eirene*, the Greek word for peace, occurs in every book of the new covenant scriptures except 1 John. In every

instance but one, in the Authorized Version it is rendered by "peace." It signifies that state of harmonious relationship attained by acceptance of the grace of God. It is active, not static. It is aggressive, not latent. It is from God, who is frequently called the God of peace. It is from Christ who is called the Lord of peace (2 Thess. 3:16). To be in perfect peace is to be whole and complete. It is to be saved, in the very fulness of that term.

The religious world is in turmoil. Believers in the Lord Jesus are fractured into hundreds of warring camps. The partisans in these splinter groups are often filled with bitterness and hatred. They have carried over into the Kingdom their previous dispositions. "For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by men and hating one another" (Titus 3:3). They are acting as if the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior had never appeared, and as if He had never saved us. All of this is contrary to the will of the Father. It is opposed to the prayer of Jesus. But the condition exists and it is useless to deny it. What should be the attitude of one who deeply loves the Christ and his fellowmen, as respects the problem of disunity and strife?

It would seem that his course is clearly outlined in the new covenant scriptures. First, he must recognize the party spirit for what it is. It is a work of the flesh. It will debar one who practices it from inheritance in the kingdom of God (Gal. 5:19). This will eliminate the possibility of mistaking a desire for unity for mere ambition to build up a party. Secondly, he must actively engage in the attempt to promote peace. He must be a *peacemaker* **if he would be called a son of God (Matt. 5:9). He cannot be indifferent, unconcerned or unmoved by the rents in the body of the Christ. He dare not withdraw into the castle and snap and snarl at those who are actively engaged in trying to do something. He must seek to promote harmony or forfeit his right to be called a son of God.**

In the third place he must recognize that peace is not an accident. Unity is not a chance happening. Peace must be sought and pursued (1 Peter 3:11). It is a fruit of the Spirit which is reaped by those who sow the seed (James 3:18). Not only must peace be planted, but it must be tended. It must be fertilized. It must be cultivated and nourished. It must be aimed at. It cannot be hit upon by those who wave their weapon aimlessly and pull the trigger. "Aim at righteousness, faith, love, and *peace*, along with those who call upon the Lord out of a pure heart." A state of division exists. It is contrary to God's will. We are charged with bringing about unity. Unity is the result of purposeful planning. It is never accidental. It follows then that true children of God must have a definite, positive approach to this problem, and they must be working on it.

We must not think we can be saved by maintaining the status quo. If a man is struck by an automobile in front of my house, I cannot shrug it off by saying that none of my immediate family are hurt, therefore, it is no concern of mine; nor can I be justified by criticizing the methods of help used by my neighbors. So it is while the body of Christ lies bleeding and broken. I cannot excuse myself by saying it does not affect my congregation or group, nor will I be justified by sitting in an ivory tower complaining that the bandages and remedies applied by others are inadequate and useless. What am I doing to bring peace to this troubled world. I must face this question some day. I want to face it now. It is not a question for the "sweet bye and bye." It is a question for the "now and now." Peace will reign in the world to come. But will it reign in this present evil world?

Peace must be waged! Some men wage war and endure hardship, privation and suffering to attain their objectives. Yet war is hell, according to one of the great generals of the past. By the same token peace is heaven. What am I willing to sacrifice as a soldier for peace, with a part of my uniform the footgear of the preparation of the gospel of peace (Eph. 6:15)? Can I slog along across No Man's Land, wading through mud and gore, seeking

my objective? Or will I stay in General Headquarters and play it safe? The soldier for peace must make himself vulnerable.

Can I continue the campaign if others mistake my motives, seek to undermine the strategy of peace, misrepresent what I say, and hate me for not hating others? Can I endure it to be called a rebel, a heretic and a traitor? These are all terms in the vocabulary of the factionalist. Can I endure the long hours of study, the absence from loved ones, and the constant pressure? That all depends upon whether the Cause in which I have enlisted is a passing fancy, a shimmering delusion, or a real and consuming passion.

If I am dedicated to the Christ, crucified to the world and sanctified by the Spirit, then "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself." The disunity, bitterness, party spirit and division which exist today have come from the seeds of animosity and hatred, planted in fertile soil by our forefathers. They separated from one another in their anger and fed the growing atmosphere of distrust by their stubbornness. Shall we continue to walk in the same weary rut like a blind horse on a treadmill? Will we bequeath to our children and grandchildren a granary stored with the seed of distrust and malice? If peace is a fruit it cannot be gathered until men prepare the soil and sow the seed. Shall I not leave a heritage of working for peace? Shall I not show them the gate leading to blessing, rather than to death?

How can peace be waged? Perhaps we have *practiced* **disunity so long we do not know how to** *plead* **for unity. I will venture to state a few convictions which I feel must be a part of the strategy for peace. Peace must be waged in love. "If there is . . . any incentive of love . . . complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind" (Phil 2:1, 2). Love is the incentive to unity and not vice versa. We do not love each other because we are of the same mind; we come to be of the same mind because we love each**

other. It is not unity which promotes love, but love which promotes unity. "If you love those who love you, what reward have you?" (Matt. 5:46). I must begin, continue and finish in love.

It is inconceivable that I would mistreat, abuse, or take unfair advantage of someone whom I love. Therefore if one differs with me upon matters relating to the service of God, I must make a difference between the person and what he advocates. Jesus died for him. He may not have died for what he argues. It will help me to realize that he is sincere about what he says although I may deem it to be in error. He cannot say anything else if he really believes it. I cannot suggest unity based upon the sacrifice of honestly-held conviction. I can receive him while mentally rejecting what he assumes is correct.

I must listen to what he says, weighing it carefully and dispassionately, always acceding to what is truth, and then, in kindness, reasoning with him, on points of disagreement. It is quite sectarian to imagine that he is wrong upon everything because he is mistaken about some things. My first task should be to see where we can agree, rather than to ferret out areas of disagreement. We can stand together upon anything that both of us conceive of as truth. And from that we can reason toward greater agreement upon other matters.

Under no circumstance must I sacrifice principle in order to have the good will of men. However, I must distinguish between those things that are basic and essential to a relationship unto God and those matters which are incidental. "It is my prayer that your love may be more and more accompanied by clear knowledge and keen perception, for testing things that differ, so that you may be men of transparent character" (Phil. 1:9, 10. *Weymouth*). **Love accompanied by clear knowledge and keen perception. What a trio of excellencies! To be willing to talk together, to exchange views in love, to treat each other as equals, does not imply an acceptance of all the**

varied viewpoints at once— or ever!

All truth is equally true but it is not all of equal importance. It is true that the scriptures teach that Methuselah was 969 years old when he died. And I believe that. But it is not nearly so important as the fact that Jesus died for my sins. It is a fact that after the Supper Jesus and the eleven sang a song and went out to the Mount of Olives, but that does not strike a responsive chord in my heart as does the account of what transpired in the Garden of Gethsemane. I have known men to get so intense in debating about the way in which the supper was served that they never got around to its real purpose.

Any strategy of unity for those who have been estranged must begin with *association*. It cannot begin anywhere else. If a married couple have gotten on each other's nerves until the wife has had to leave, they will never be together again until they begin to meet. So long as they stay aloof and nurture their hatred they will grow farther apart. The same thing holds true in the realm of religion. If there has come a formal break it can never be repaired until the two sides begin to associate together.

We do not shoot men full of peace nor bombard them with unity! Peace and unity come as a result of patient striving in love, of long years of fruitful discussion and contact, of mutual understanding arrived at through long periods of prayer and study together. Unity can never be secured by two persons or groups who draw their rigid battle lines, and seek only to replenish their own supply of ammunition from God's arsenal so they may blast each other into submission. Such a course makes for wresting the scriptures, creating arguments where God has made none, public debates with their rabid followings, and the drawing away in sadness of those hungry souls who ask for bread and are given a stone, who ask a fish and are given a serpent.

Fair treatment of those who differ with us, a recognition of

brotherhood in Jesus of all immersed penitent believers— these do not mean endorsement of error, compromise with false concepts, nor acceptance of interpretations that we believe to be wrong. They rather constitute only the foundation upon which we all may explore our major problems, and from such contacts as are established build a better and brighter prospect for tomorrow.

It is only those who have an inner fear that they lack truth who shrink back from contact and withdraw into the confines of partisan citadels. Let us feel a sense of compassion for those who dare not face the battle, but let those who possess the vision and courage not be daunted, but press the battle for peace. "For God hath called us to peace."

Thoughts on Fellowship (1)

Contents

"God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor. 1:9).

The church of God at Corinth consisted of called saints, those who were sanctified in Christ Jesus (1:2). The state or condition to which they were called by God is expressed by the term "*the fellowship* of his Son Jesus Christ." To this state they attained through "the grace of God which is given by Jesus Christ" (1:4). Because they were called into such a state they were to avoid all schisms among themselves (1:10). Being bound by a common tie, they were to avoid those things which would disrupt the community, or place strains upon their union. They were to "endeavor to guard the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3). By this means they would "walk worthy of the calling wherewith you are called."

What is involved in "the fellowship of Jesus Christ our Lord"? How do we attain unto it? Who are participants in it? How do they remain in it? What action will separate them from this state? How do we guard it? Surely these are matters of grave importance, and should challenge the thinking of every person on earth who believes that there is a God, and that Jesus Christ is His Son, and our Savior. The state of fellowship represents a complete change in relationship. The prior condition is described as being "alienated from the life of God." The new state is described as one of sonship, in which the participant is "an heir of God through Christ" (Gal. 4:7). From

a state in which there was no sharing in the blessings of God, a transformation takes place in which the one who is called becomes a sharer of the divine bounty as a son.

It is our conviction that the community of saints in Christ Jesus is the earthly culmination of that eternal purpose which is described as "a plan for the ages to gather together in one all things in Christ" (Eph. 1:10). The mystery of fellowship was hidden in God from the beginning of the world (Eph. 3:9). In other ages it was not made known unto the sons of men, but in this final age on earth, it was revealed unto the holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. The purpose of this revelation was "to make all men see" (Eph. 3:9). If, then, we are to see the truth upon this wonderful subject we must go to the revelation contained in the Christian scriptures. Our ideas, opinions and notions relative to fellowship mean nothing unless they coincide with God's revelation. Our task is to ascertain from the new covenant scriptures what significance and meaning is attached to the term by the Holy Spirit.

The concept of fellowship with the Father, and with the Son, belongs to mankind only since that Son came in the flesh. This is abundantly clear to the student of the first epistle of John. Judaism provided an elaborate system of rules and ceremonies by which its adherents were kept apart from God, each other, and the world about them. The keynote was struck at the foot of Sinai, when their constitution was to be announced. Bounds were placed about the mountain so that the people would not come near. The threat of death was held over the Israelites. They were literally fenced off from God. "For they could not endure the order that was given, If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned. Indeed so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, I tremble with fear" (Hebrews 12:20, 21). The ritualism of the law maintained barriers between the people and God. The Almighty communed with them from the thick darkness of the most holy place. He was separated from them by a thick veil.

The temple had its court of Gentiles, and across its barrier no Gentile dared step to mingle with the chosen race. Josephus, in his description of the Temple says, "When you go through these first cloisters unto the second court of the Temple, there was a partition made of stone all round, whose height was three cubits. Its construction was very elegant; upon it stood pillars at equal distances from one another, declaring the law of purity, some in Greek and some in Roman letters that no foreigner should go within the sanctuary" (*The Wars of the Jews*, 5, 5, 2). In 1871 one of these prohibiting tablets was actually excavated. The wording on it reads, "Let no one of any other nation come within the fence and barrier around the Holy Place. Whoever will be taken doing so will himself be responsible for the fact that his death will ensue."

There was the Court of the Women with its partition enclosing it, and there was the court of the People, who were Israelites and males, then there was the court of the Priests, and finally the Holy Place itself. The temple was a series of barriers which discouraged fraternization at all under the threat of death. Even in the Greek world the caste system reared its ugly head and Cicero wrote, "As the Greeks say, all men are divided into two classes— Greeks and barbarians."

The death of the Messiah marked the end of this state with its exclusive and artificial barriers by a startling symbol. As he expired on the cross "the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom" (Mark 15:38). That veil was thirty feet high. If it had rent from the bottom to the top it might have been urged that it was done by man. But to be rent from the top to the bottom is assurance that man had naught to do with it. The significance of this is graphically depicted by the writer of the Hebrew letter: "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh: and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of

faith" (Hebrews 10:19-22). The boldness and full assurance which is ours should be contrasted with the excessive fear and trembling at Sinai. There the command was "Draw not nigh!" Now the invitation is "Let us draw near!"

The death of Jesus not only established a nearness of the people of God expressed by His language, "I will receive you, and be a Father unto you" (2 Cor. 6:17, 18), but it also removed barriers which separated men from their fellows. "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us . . . that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby" (Eph. 2:14, 16). It is worthy of note that the work of achieving unity is not credited to man. That is the work of Jesus. He made both one. He broke down the barrier of separation. He abolished in his flesh the enmity. He made in himself of two one new man. He reconciled both unto God in one body. He came and preached peace.

It is through Him we all have access by one Spirit unto the Father. "*Therefore* . . . ye are fellowcitizens with the saints" (Eph. 2:19). Not because of what we have done, but because of what He has done. The unity is achieved by the Spirit. It is called "the fellowship of the Spirit" (Phil. 2:2). All we can do is to guard and maintain that "unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Any person who erects a wall of partition to divide, separate and segregate brethren, regardless of what that wall may be, thereby opposes the work of God's Son and does despite to the Spirit of grace. He runs counter to the divine purpose in the world.

The temple with its sacerdotal orders and its ritual pageantry is gone. It "stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation" (Heb. 9:10). What has taken the place of these things since Jesus has entered "into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Hebrews 9:24)? My answer is that the *koinonia*, the fellowship of God, through the Spirit, has

displaced the ceremonies and rules of the Mosaic dispensation. These things "could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience" (Hebrews 9:9). There was an impenetrable barrier between the person and His God, for "the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest."

What a change has been wrought by grace. The veil has been rent! We have access unto the Father by one Spirit. From an aching heart to an accepted heart in one beautiful act. I need not climb a sacred mountain nor make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to feel a closeness with God. It is no longer a question of this place or that place, of this spot or that one. "Neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father . . . the true worshiper shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth." The true worshiper does not think of attempting to worship God with things. He does not attempt to confine Him to a specific place. God is a Spirit. He is unconfined and unconfinable.

The spirit of man is that part of man which looks beyond the carnal, the physical, the fleshly. It is the part of man which dreams dreams. It is that part of man which cannot always be confined in a prison-house of flesh but which will someday break through the barriers of sense and feeling. True worship is when the spirit, the invisible and immortal part of man, speaks to and meets with God who is immortal and invisible. This is not done on sacred mountains. It is not confined to golden temples. God is a Spirit and he seeks a worship which is in spirit and in reality.

My body is a temple. My heart is a most holy place. God dwells in me even as I dwell in Him. "This is a great mystery, and I take it to mean Christ and the church" (Eph. 5:32). What a fellowship! What a joy divine! We mutually come closer together. "Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you" (James 4:8). "Ye are the temple of the living God, as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (2 Cor. 6:16). This fragile

structure of clay houses the Deity. The symbol of God's presence in the tabernacle was the Shekinah, visible as a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. The Holy Spirit rests upon us as the cloud did upon the tabernacle in the wilderness.

"In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord, in whom we also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph. 2:21-22). A holy temple! A habitation for God! How this transcends the kind of ritual which is done over and over, grinding out devotions like a heathen prayer wheel. "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have of God and ye are not your own" (1 Cor. 6:19). What a wonderful temple. What a glorious tenant. He is with me every hour of every day. Worship is not something offered in five special acts. It is the prostration of myself before the Spirit, the bowing of myself before His regal presence. It is the very consciousness that He is with me in everything I say and do.

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you" (1 Cor. 3:16). What a transformation. In other days we had to go up to God. "Three times in the year shall all the males appear before the Lord God" (Exo. 23:17). Now God has come down to us. He has appeared before us. He dwells in us and walks in us, not at stated seasons, but every hour of the day and night. How foolish for men to talk about sacred seasons and holy days. There are no special sacred places and no special sacred days. Every place where a Christian is is a sacred place. Under the old regime nothing was sacred unless it was fenced off from the profane on every side. The word profane means before the temple. It referred to that which was left outside when one entered a pagan place of worship so that it would not be constituted sacred. Under the new order all that God has made sacred, and nothing is profane except for one who defiles it by his sinful attitude. "For the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof" (1 Cor.

10:26).

Fellowship has to do with sharing. It can never be divorced from this idea. Through grace Jesus shared our lot. "Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood he also himself likewise took part of the same" (Heb. 2:14). "He emptied himself, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men" (Phil. 2:7). "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich" (2 Cor. 8:9). The Christian life is a shared response to God called forth by the gift of God of which we have been made partakers. We are made partakers of Christ through the gospel. Our obedience to the demands of the gospel, introduces us into that state or condition called fellowship with God. We are in fellowship with each other only because we sustain the same relationship to Him. We cannot create that state. We cannot invent the terms by which we enter it. We are called into it by the Father.

1. Fellowship with God is not conditioned upon perfect knowledge of the divine revelation. "If anyone imagines that he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know" (1 Cor. 8:2). One who professes that he knows everything, is guilty of a highly inflamed imagination.

2. It is not contingent upon attainment to a life of sinless perfection. "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8). "For we all make many mistakes" (James 2:2).

3. It is not contingent upon an ability to explain or expound every point of doctrine. If it were we could not grow after becoming members of the body. "Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that we who teach shall be judged with greater strictness."

It is contingent upon a complete surrender of self to the Christ, and a willingness to follow as He leads. On the divine side, fellowship is a union with and a participation in the life of Christ through the Spirit; on the human side it is a communion with brethren whose mutual relations were transformed by the Spirit. If fellowship were limited only to those who had perfect knowledge, led perfect lives, or could explain every point of doctrine perfectly a lot of us would never experience it at all. It is regrettable that those who create such terms only eliminate themselves

Thoughts on Fellowship (2)

Contents

The word "fellowship" is generally from the Greek *koinonia*. This word is rendered fellowship 12 times, communion 4, communication 1, contribution 1, distribution 1, to communicate 1. Actually the term koinonia has such varied aspects no single English word is able to express them all. It is so rich in meaning that it more than exhausts the meaning of any term we have. It is a derivative of *koinos*, the word for common. "Common" has two different meanings in English. It can refer to that which is jointly held by a large group, and it is in this respect that Jude speaks of "the common salvation."

It can also refer to that which is commonplace and vulgar as contrasted with that which is rare and distinguished. In this sense, it came to be applied to that which was unhallowed or not ceremonially clean (Cp. Acts 10:14, 15). The word vulgar is from *vulgus*, the crowd, the common people. The Latin Vulgate was a version which was given to all and made available to the commoners. This is comparable to the word "profane" from the Latin. This refers to that which was *pro fanum*, that is, left outside the temple or sanctuary, and thus not consecrated. We speak of profane history in contrast with that which was inspired, and had a sacred origin.

The basic definition of *koinonia* as given by Joseph Thayer, is: "Fellowship, association, community, communion, joint participation, intercourse." In its application to the New Testament usage, he divides it into three parts: (1) The share

which one has in anything, participation; (2) intercourse, fellowship, intimacy; (3) a benefaction jointly contributed, a collection, a contribution. It is interesting to note that this last is a use unknown to profane authors. It is an acquired meaning given only by the New Testament writers, and even though Thayer defines *koinonia* as "a collection, a contribution," he adds, "as exhibiting an embodiment or proof of fellowship." Actually, the gift or benefaction is not the *koinonia* at all, as we shall later demonstrate. It is a manifestation of it. The *koinonia* (fellowship) is already existent and prompts the gift. We shall learn that for Christians, the only genuine riches we have are those we share in the Christ, and we supply the bodily needs of each other because we all alike are redeemed and in Him. The sharing of earthly goods is a spontaneous expression of our sharing in the divine wealth.

The word for "fellow" came into our language from the Old Norse term for a comrade or associate. The suffix *ship* is Anglo-Saxon in origin and is generally found in connection with nouns denoting persons. It relates to a state or condition in which such persons move. We speak of friendship, partnership, and sonship. Ignorance of this fact prompts many to use ridiculous and absurd expressions. Indications of some of these regularly come from the disciple brotherhood. Men write and ask me if I *fellowship* cups, classes, colleges, fermented wine, orphan homes or instrumental music. I would like for someone to tell me how to do so, if I wanted to.

One of the most tragic misconceptions is based on the idea that fellowship is synonymous with, or equivalent to, endorsement of anything or everything the other "fellow" may hold or advocate. In any final analysis this must lead to the conclusion that no two persons could ever be in fellowship until they both reach perfect knowledge and complete agreement upon every minute detail. The folly of such a view can easily be detected by any thinking person. We do not make other kindred terms subject to such unreasonable interpretation. Can

friendship **exist between those who do not agree upon all issues. Can** *partnership* **exist between persons who are unequal in knowledge and attainment, and who possess divergent views? Certainly there are many close friends who disagree upon some matters, and many partners who associate in business in spite of divergent opinions.**

We are to be in fellowship "with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ" (1 John 1:3). Does this mean that God did not accept us into fellowship until our understanding of all things is equal to his divine knowledge? If so, how can we "*grow in grace and knowledge of the truth***" after we come into Christ? Now, if God being perfect, can be in fellowship with us in our ignorance and imperfection, why do we set up a standard for others which he did not set up for us? If it be argued that John meant only the apostles were in fellowship with the Father and the Son, the difficulty is not lessened.**

Were James and John in the fellowship of Jesus when they were making the demand that one of them sit on His right hand and one on the left when He came in His kingdom? Were the others who became angry at this in His fellowship? Was Peter in His fellowship when He tried to thwart His death by saying "Be it not so, for this shall not be unto you." Was he in the fellowship of Christ from Pentecost to the time of his vision on the housetop at Joppa? Certainly he did not realize that God had removed the restrictions upon eating of meats and zealously followed the ceremonial regime of Judaism. Nor did he previously grasp the great truth that "God is no respecter of persons." If he could be in the fellowship until he learned these truths, may not others be in the same fellowship, while learning the way of truth more perfectly?

The fact is that the fellowship of the new covenant is not based upon unanimity of opinion, interpretation, or even understanding of scriptural doctrine. It does not imply nor indicate endorsement of the position of one with whom we may

differ. Fellowship is one thing; endorsement of the position taken by another is a wholly different thing. Fellowship of Christ, and in Christ, is a state or condition into which we are called by God through the gospel; endorsement of an interpretation or idea of one in or out of the fellowship is a rational act of our own minds. It is the jumbled, mixed-up thinking on this point that has created the factionalism, partisan spirit, and sectarianism, so rife among the heirs of the restoration movement.

Not long ago I attended a meeting conducted by a young brother. He announced in the newspaper that he would hold a "gospel meeting." His gospel consisted of informing the partisans who were present that grouping of students in classes to study the sacred oracles of God was a tool of hell and an instrument of Satan. This was the Good News of salvation! It was for this Jesus died on the cross. It was this to which all of the prophets gave witness. After the meeting I introduced myself to him, and he in turn introduced me to several about him. He was careful each time to say "Mr. Ketcherside." As I spoke to him and to each of the others, I addressed him as "brother." During what he referred to as his sermon the speaker alluded to "the brotherhood" several times. I asked him if he considered me a member of it, and if not, to tell me what I would have to do that I had not done to become a part of it. He hemmed and hawed and was hesitant to commit himself on either count.

Later, at my urgent invitation, he attended a service where I was speaking. I mentioned my joy at his presence and requested him to lead in prayer. He shook his head in refusal. Afterwards he told me he could not "fellowship" me because I did not oppose Bible classes, and he was afraid that if he prayed to God at my request, it would consist of "fellowship." I felt sorry for him, for I grew up in the same kind of bigoted and partisan relationship. I can recall how we used to discuss whether it was right to call a man a "brother" who disagreed with us on colleges, orphan homes, classes, cups, instrumental music, or the millennial theory.

I was afraid to call upon a man to pray to God who was not of "our group," for I realized what "the brotherhood" would do to me if they found it out. I did not want to be put through the meat grinder or sausage mill. It seems incredible to me now that we once drove out from us one who addressed a Christian Church elder as brother and asked him to lead in prayer. I am thrilled that the grace of God delivered me from such littleness. I have recently very carefully scrutinized my heart on all of these controversial issues. I find that I have not materially altered my position on a single one of them. I am stronger than ever in my previous convictions on most of them. But I am no longer afraid of what men will do unto me! I refuse to be the mouthpiece of a faction, or the cat's paw of a clique! I am no longer a party pigeon or a Simple Simon. I want to belong to the Lord and bow unto Him only. To us there is but one Lord!

I have learned that those who differ with me on these issues are my brethren, because of their relationship to the family, or household of God. We are not brothers because we have the same opinions but because we have the same Father. We also have the same mother, for Jerusalem which is from above is the mother of us all. If having the same Father and Mother does not make us brothers, pray tell me what it would take. Every baptized penitent believer on this earth is my brother, and we are in *fellowship* because we are a part of the brotherhood of Christ. That is the only *brotherhood* on this whole wide earth in which I am the least bit interested.

I do not agree on much with most of those who are in it, and do not fully agree with any of them, but fellowship in God is one thing, and perfect agreement is a wholly different thing. My father had six children, and they often differed with each other and even with their parents, but it never once occurred to me to deny they were my brothers and sisters because we argued loud and long. We were brothers not because of what we had done but because we were introduced by birth into a family state or relationship. The relationship into which we are introduced by

the new birth is the fellowship of the new covenant. We have been in fellowship with a lot more people than we ever realized, or even yet realize. I am in fellowship with every saved person on this earth, that is, if I am saved. When I was younger, the family of God was a little one but now that I have grown out of my own provincialism, that family has increased perceptibly. Praise His name!

Every person who has received Christ Jesus, and thus has been born of the water and of the Spirit, who has experienced the riches of the glory of God's mystery "which is Christ in you, the hope of glory," is in the fellowship. They are *partakers* **of the inheritance of the saints in light, having been delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the Kingdom of the Messiah. Having been called into the kingdom and glory of God, and having been sealed by the Holy Spirit they are in** *communion* **with God and with every other person on earth who has been born again. They are the beneficiaries of the grace of our Lord, of the love of God, and of the fellowship of the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 13:14).**

When the apostle wrote to Corinth he told them they had been called into the fellowship of Jesus Christ. They were torn by partisan strife, tolerant of immorality, intolerant of the scruples of the brethren, impleading each other in heathen courts, and even so factious they could not eat the love feast together. He was fearful of coming among them lest he find quarreling, jealousy, anger, selfishness, slander, gossip, deceit and disorder. Yet he did not tell "the faithful" to go and start a "loyal" congregation! He did not even intimate that he would split them and take out a group when he arrived. He asked, "Do you not know that Jesus Christ is in you?— unless indeed you fail to meet the test" (2 Cor. 13:5). What was the test? Was it an attitude as to classes for Bible study, individual cups, fermented wine, unleavened bread, orphan homes, etc.? These are tests which men have concocted to shatter and split into factious groups those who are in the fellowship.

God devised no such tests. Jesus Christ can be in men, who in their weakness and ignorance, differ in opinion as to these things. Paul said "What we pray for is your improvement" (2 Cor. 13:9). Not once in all of the divine revelation of God was a congregation of believers ever advised to split or separate. Not once was a group of believers told to come out from, or separate themselves from the other believers. If so, where is the place? Paul did not advise the congregation of Corinth to divide. He did not advise the establishment of two "Churches of Christ" in Corinth— one a "heathen courts congregation" and the other an "anti-heathen courts congregation."

Here is what he wrote: "Mend your ways, heed my appeal, agree with one another, live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you." Never in the checkered history of the saints has this exhortation been needed more than at present. Every word needs to burn and sear our hearts until "we put no obstacle in any one's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry" (2 Cor. 6:3). The Christian life is difficult enough in these days without adding an extra burden of hate and animosity kindled by the factious spirit. Let us labor for unity!

Thoughts on Fellowship (3)

Contents

The essence of true spiritual investigation is to attempt to understand the real meaning contained in the revelation of God. The Holy Spirit conveyed to mankind the will of the Father in words employed by men in their communication with each other. Our task is to determine the meaning which God attached to those words. In order to do this we must divest ourselves of prejudice and bias, otherwise we will read into the scriptures our slanted views. It is an acknowledged fact that every sect in Christendom claims spiritual authority for its exclusive doctrines. Those who go to the word of God expecting to find confirmation for a preconceived idea will generally find it, although they get out of the scriptures something which God did not put into them.

What is generally true of the religious world is also applicable to the various factions in the disciple brotherhood. As a case in point we mention the controversy over the use of mechanical instruments in public worship, in which some of the arguments in its defense are about as ridiculous as those used by its opponents. Both groups have gone to the Book to confirm their respective positions. They found that for which they were looking. On the subject of "fellowship" even wider divergence is found among the two dozen splinter groups, few of whom even take the time to find out what God meant by His use of the term.

A short time ago I wrote a prominent leader in the faction which makes a test of fellowship out of the matter of grouping

students to instruct them in the word of the Lord. I presented to him a hypothetical case as follows. There is one brother in a congregation who does not think it is right to have classes to study the word of the Lord. All of the other members have a deep conviction that it is right and proper to do so. The elders go to the dissenting brother and express their regard for him and their respect for his personal views. They encourage him to come and participate in the corporate worship and mutual edification, and assure him that no reflection will be made against him if he waits to come until the classes are concluded. They confirm their love to him as a brother in Christ.

I asked the brother who is a factional leader these questions. What would you advise this brother to do? What scriptural basis would you give for such advice? He replied that he would advise the man to leave the congregation, call for a "loyal" preacher, and try to establish a "faithful" church. In the event that none of the members of the "disloyal" group would come out and take their stand, he would advise the man to move off to a locality where he could worship with a "loyal church." And as a basis for this conglomerate scheme he cited just one scriptural text— 2 Corinthians 6:14-15.

Brethren, regardless of your position on grouping students to study the sacred oracles that is sectarianism gone to seed! This preacher, in spite of his protestations of "loyalty" is slashing the body of God's Son to pieces. He is ripping it into bloody shreds. He is giving counsel which may destroy the souls of those who heed it, and is actually doing despite to the Spirit of grace. And he demonstrates his utter ignorance of the very basis he quotes for his divisive advice. We propose an investigation of this scripture which has provided a weapon for carving the church of God into ribbons.

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord

hath Christ with Belial? and what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God, as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you."

Nothing is clearer to the honest student of God's word than the fact that the primitive disciples of our Lord regarded themselves as a community of saints, separated from unbelievers and idolaters by faith in the Messiah as the hope of their salvation. Through the bond of this faith in Him, they were linked together as a family of God. They constituted a temple or shrine in which dwelt the living God. Their faith in Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God, constituted the basis of their communal life. The believers were not always agreed among themselves, as witness the congregation at Corinth, but those in Christ who disagreed were not "unbelievers" and were never so designated.

They might hold different views in Christ about the validity of the gifts of the Spirit, or about the proper conduct toward eating in idol temples, or toward the resurrection or the millennium, but these did not make them unbelievers in the great basic truth which united them. There was room in Jesus for differences over many items, and the umbrella of God's love sheltered them all. They were still children of light. They constituted the temple of God. They were not disenfranchised by their views honestly held and advocated.

There were two great communities upon earth. One was the church, the other was composed of the pagan world. The first was a *koinonia* of light, and in Him is no darkness at all. The temple in which God dwelled through the Spirit was aglow with the light of His presence. It was a kingdom of light not because of the perfection in life and knowledge of those who composed

the temple, but because the Light of heaven dwelled therein as the pillar of fire rested upon the tabernacle in the wilderness. It was not the material of which it was composed that lighted the tabernacle, and it is not the stones which compose the living temple which have the light. "In Him was life and the life was the light of men."

The other was a *koinonia* of darkness. It was the habitation of Belial in whom is no light. Those who walked in it were past feeling, having given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. They had their understanding darkened, because they were alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that was in them, because of the blindness of their heart. They were a dominion of darkness from which we were delivered by Him and transferred into the kingdom of his beloved Son.

Each of these communities had its sacrifices. Each expressed its fellowship the only way it can be expressed, by communal acts. Since eating and drinking together was an open manifestation of fellowship, this came to be the symbol of the mystic bond which united them. One temple sacrificed to God; the other to idols. One temple brought man into sacred unity with heaven; the other into fellowship with the demons who motivated the idolatry. The apostle writes: "What say I then? that the idol is anything, or that which is sacrificed to idols is anything? But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with demons. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of demons: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of demons" (1 Cor. 10:20, 21). Be sure to note the usage of the terms "fellowship" and "partakers."

We are now prepared to note the passage in 2 Corinthians 6:14-18. The admonition to "Be ye not unequally yoked together *with unbelievers*," has no application whatsoever to any alliance

or association between members of two branches, or sects, in Christendom. It has been frequently misused with reference to the marriage of a member of the Church of Christ with a Baptist. Regardless of the advisability of two people who have been reared in different legalistic frameworks seeking to form an intimate union, this passage does not deal with it topside or bottom.

Most brethren are not willing to take the recommendation or command to "Come out from among them, and be ye separate." This would break up at once every marriage on earth between people of two sects. But a Baptist is a believer in Christ in the fair sense of the term. The problem of sectism among various kinds of believers is post-apostolic. It did not occur during the time of the apostles and there is nothing written about how we ought to treat each other with our various theological speculations. But to label such people as unbelievers when they freely confess that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, is to do serious injury to the word of faith.

Sometimes it has been used to keep a brother from buying a filling station in league with a Methodist. How silly can we become? Most of us at sometime or other in our lives are linked with people of various religious opinions. Workers in automobile assembly plants, teachers in the public schools, and employees in almost every kind of establishment in the world are forced to work with those who see things differently than they do, but these people are not pagans. They are not heathen.

The instruction certainly has nothing to do with whether a girl from a "one cup congregation" should date a boy in a "cups congregation" as the distinction is so naively and childishly made by some of the brethren. Regardless of whether such ought to happen, or whether they are suited to one another or not, it was not the purpose of the Holy Spirit to suggest it here, and some of the more common applications made of the passage would be downright amusing, if it were not for the serious fact

that factional leaders, with more ambition for personal power than love for unity in Jesus, cram such thoughts down the theological throats of gullible and unsuspecting partisans, who in their ignorance defeat the very purpose of the cross, and do so under the guise of "loyalty" to Him whom they crucify afresh and put to an open shame.

In the scriptural usage of the term "believer" it refers to every person who accepts Jesus for what He claims to be regardless of their hang-ups on various concepts of doctrine. It has no concern with legalistic hang-ups which have separated the Christian world. It refers to one who is not a pagan or heathen. By the same token the word "unbeliever" refers to one who is afar off, who has no love for Jesus and no concern for His kingdom. To apply it to those earnest souls today who may understand some of the implications of the doctrine of the new covenant scriptures differently than we do is to do an absolute injustice to those who are as much believers as we are.

What does the passage mean? The *koinonia* of heaven is expressed by the terms righteousness, light, Christ, believer, and temple of God. The *koinonia* of the underworld is expressed by the terms unrighteousness, darkness, Belial, infidel, and idols. There is a community attached to Christ. It includes the angels of heaven and the men on earth who have acknowledged Jesus as their prince. There is another community presided over by Belial. It includes the demons of hell and those on earth who are idolaters, refusing to acknowledge the sovereignty of God over their lives. The two are absolutely incompatible. There can be no more fellowship between these communities than there is between their respective princes. They have *nothing* in common. So long as God walks in us and lives in us, we cannot participate in idolatrous rites, practices and services.

What is meant by the expression, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate and touch not the unclean thing?" This is the handle that fits every factional tool ever devised. It has

been used as the wedge to shatter us into fragments. It is the axe in the hand of spiritual demagogues used to split and splinter those who met and worked together for years. It has been made the agent of separation, heartache and tears, and in many localities has clabbered the milk of human kindness, and inspired such gall and bitterness, that those who once sat together at the Lord's Table, have set up rival tables, and treat each other with such lack of courtesy and compassion as is not so much as named among the Gentiles.

First of all suspicion has been sown, generally secretly and clandestinely. Those who are soft have been sought out like termites look for soft wood. Suspicion leads into doubt of faithfulness to the thing that is made the rallying-ground and when the time comes the boom is lowered and division comes. Then there are two opposing parties who regard each other across well-defined lines and proselyte each other with a fervor which was never shown in former days when the world was on one side and the church on the other.

Does the scripture mean that when my Baptist neighbor, who is so kind, generous, and friendly, invites me to listen to his preacher in a special meeting, that I must draw the garments of my self-righteousness closer about me, to keep from being defiled by his touch, and insult him, because he does not know that I am to "be separate and touch not the unclean thing"? What is the unclean thing? Is it a Bible class for little children, individual cups, fermented wine, a special way of breaking the loaf, colleges, orphan homes, etc.?

Remember the preacher to whom I posed the question about the brother who did not believe in classes, would advise him to try and rend a congregation at peace among themselves in Christ, and this was the scripture he gave for dividing believers in the Lord! To him "the unclean thing" was a system of grouping students to teach them to develop faith in the Christ. Could ever a more damaging, destructive idea be advanced from

that which would take the word of God and completely ignoring its purpose, use it in such a manner as to shatter the body of the Lord? This is carving the body of Jesus into bits with the sword which he furnished to subdue an alien world.

The unclean thing which we are not to touch, refers to the contaminating lust and vice associated with the impure mystery of idolatry. The term is not even remotely related to differences among brethren as to interpretation of various scriptures. It would be impossible to describe the degradation and degeneracy growing out of idolatrous worship, and believers in the Christ are to have nothing to do with such practices or those who engage in them. It was an age of moral suicide, of unnatural lust, and of murder. What agreement hath the temple of God with idols?

Even though modern sectism is deplorable, it is still a condition existing among believers in the Christ. Our opposition to it must not be based upon the idea that our religious neighbors are infidels or idolaters, motivated by a voluntary love for an attachment to Belial. My Baptist and Methodist friends are firm believers in the truth that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. They are certainly mistaken about certain items contained in His will and they have exalted their love for a party above their love for a unity of all believers. But to quote the verses under consideration and apply them to those who are of a different order in Christendom, for the purpose of forbidding association, even in order to reason with and teach them, is to make of us the most rabid of all sectarians. These people do not constitute a realm of "darkness" or "unrighteousness" as the terms are used here. Many of them live above moral reproach and have never engaged in filthy or immoral conduct because of idolatrous leanings. They are frequently good examples in moral behavior for some of their attackers. It ill becomes a preacher who is carrying on an affair with another man's wife, to get on the radio and slash away at others of the religious community as sectarian and in "darkness" when their lives are a credit to his

own.

Every honest, sincere believer in the Messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth is my brother, either in prospect or in fact. If such a believer has submitted to immersion on the basis of his faith in Jesus, he is my brother in reality, a child of God, and a member of His family. He may not have understood all of the blessings accruing from baptism into Christ, and he may have been mistaken as to the time of the bestowal of some of them, but his ignorance of effect or time will not nullify God's grace or promise, if he surrenders his will to that of the Messiah. Since his birth, he may be in error about many things pertaining to his responsibility, worship or service, and he may require a tremendous amount of teaching and adjustment, but he is still my brother, and I will teach him as a brother, and not count him as a pagan or an infidel. If our hearts are both honest we will grow ever closer to each other as we both "grow in grace and knowledge of the truth." The transformation in our lives through conformity to the life of Christ, will produce uniformity of heart and thought in the two of us.

Not all believers have been immersed. Some are still in the womb of the new covenant, the Jerusalem that is from above. What shall be my attitude toward these who are in that state? It will be the same as that of a family toward an unborn child. We do not revile, castigate or belittle a child in the womb. We rejoice that it has been conceived and with an air of expectancy prepare for its arrival. So I shall labor to aid those who have been conceived by faith, to come to birth and full delivery into the glorious fellowship of the sons of God. If they die before delivery I shall mourn our loss; if they are born again I shall seek to nurture, strengthen and support them until they can walk alone. To this I am dedicated, believing it is the will of him whose slave I have become.

Thoughts on Fellowship (4)

Contents

Some brethren are concerned about my explanation of fellowship and they are unable to reconcile it with traditional explanations of certain scriptures. It is difficult for them to see how we may be in fellowship and differ on any point, although most of them claim to be in fellowship and differ on many points. One of my most regular critics is thoroughly convinced that those who employ instruments of music have abandoned the faith and jumped off the deep end, while he is just as certain that those who oppose cups and classes are extremists of the worst kind. Boiled down to its real meaning, any one who agrees with him perfectly is thinking clearly while those who differ in either direction are candidates for exclusion.

It was said that when Charles V was trying to bring the world to a uniformity of belief, and employing the thumb-screw and rack to achieve it, he was one day experimenting with three clocks in his retreat at Yuste. Unable to make the three clocks keep exactly the same time, he gave it up in disgust, exclaiming, "Here I was trying to make a whole world believe exactly alike, and I can't even make three clocks keep the same time." Wesley once said, "I have no more right to object to a man holding a different opinion from mine than I have to differ from a man because he wears a wig and I wear my own hair. But if he takes his wig off, and shakes the powder in my eyes, I shall consider it my duty to get rid of him as soon as possible."

One passage which seems to give the brethren trouble is

Amos 3:3. "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" It is assumed that this teaches absolute unanimity of opinion as a requisite to fellowship in the Christ, and since I contend that fellowship is a state or condition into which we are called by God, through acceptance of His Son, and that we may walk together in Him while we are learning, even though we now differ in some particulars, it is concluded that my contention is contrary to God's plan and purpose.

Accordingly, it will be necessary for me to take time out from my outlined study on fellowship to deal with this problem, and while I am anxious to get on with my theme, I do not want to travel with such rapidity that I ignore objections which brethren consider valid. We have thought disunity and practiced it so long that it will be difficult for us to reverse our trend and go the other direction. Some of us will never be able to do that. We will continue to pursue our intractable and implacable way until death do us part.

It is obvious that my thesis is in conflict with the common *interpretation* **of Amos 3:3. That interpretation is fortunately limited to preachers of the Churches of Christ. I do not know of many others who are naive enough to offer an argument for conformity based upon it. I do not think that my position is in conflict with what Amos said, but it is in conflict with what some brethren** *think he meant* **by what he said. This would point up to us several grave dangers. One is that of jumping at conclusions while ignoring the context, or setting of a scripture. A text without its context is a pretext, as someone has pointed out.**

Another danger is that of creating an unwritten creed out of our interpretations. We are obligated to accept what God says: we are not obligated to accept what any person thinks that God meant. The basis of God's judgment will be His word, not some interpretation of it. He will open the books and we will be judged out of the things written in those books, every man according to his own works. God will not open up the books I

have written, nor will he use the *Mission Messenger* as a basis of judgment. I may be judged by what I have written, but you need not be.

Either my general proposition is in error, or the common interpretation of Amos 3:3 is wrong. Before I ever began this series of discussions on fellowship, I carefully listed every passage which might be deemed as being in opposition to the thinking which has crystallized in my heart. I examined critically every one of those passages. If even one had been in apparent controversion of my view, I would never have expressed that view. I confess that I looked for a way out. I wanted to discover a scripture which would justify my position. This passage was first on my list. In my examination of its bearing on the subject, I became convinced that it has been misused and sadly abused. I have been no less an offender than others, and I must apologize for my weakness and error.

"Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" Of course they can. They do so all of the time! I have never fully agreed with any brother upon every interpretation of the holy scriptures, yet I have walked in soul-stimulating partnership with many of them for years. Many a married couple has walked and worked together in spite of serious disagreements at frequent intervals. I doubt there has ever been a married couple that has not fallen out over something, when both of them were capable of thinking. Anyone who says he has not had an argument with his wife in twenty-five years would probably lie about other things if he got the chance. Many congregations have worshiped together in spite of varied and diverse concepts. Their love for Jesus was greater than their love for their own views and interpretations. To affirm that two cannot walk together until they have reached absolute agreement upon all issues is to deny the testimony of human history, and give the lie to our own experience. Anything less than perfect obedience would not be enough, for it would prove that two could walk together who were not agreed.

The common explanation is a good indication of what happens to those who engage in textual preaching. Nothing else has scrapped the scriptures, or disjoined and butchered God's revelation, to the degree it has been done by the popular method of preaching from a text. We want to deliver a talk on unity. Amos 3:3 looks like a good foundation, so we lift it out and start to work. And the sad result is that we employ it in such a manner as to actually divide God's people and create disunity. The purpose of any talk on unity should be to bring brethren closer to the Christ and to each other, but if you convince them that it is impossible to please God and to walk together if they are not agreed upon every point, then when they disagree on any point, they will sever relations and think they are doing God service.

But what did Amos mean? To understand this you will have to know a little bit about the man and his mission. Amos was not a recognized prophet, nor a product of the school of prophets (7:14). He was a lowly herdman and a gatherer of sycamore figs, which were used as food by the very poor. God summoned him to travel north and pour out a condemnation in the very courtyard of the king of Israel, the ten tribe northern kingdom, with its capital at Samaria. The statement in which we are interested occurs in one of the denunciatory speeches delivered by Amos. It is only one of a series of questions, intended to show the reason for his sudden appearance on the scene as a prophet. Here is the contextual matter.

"Hear this word that the Lord hath spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying, You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.

Can two walk together except they be agreed? Will a lion roar in the forest when he has no prey? will a young lion cry out of his den, if he have taken nothing? Can a bird fall in a snare

upon the earth, where no gin is for him? shall one take up a snare from the earth, and have taken nothing at all.

Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it? Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets. The lion hath roared, who will not fear? the Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy?"

The prophet is here using the common logical argument that for every effect there is a cause, and the cause is adequate to produce that effect. If a lion roars in the forest you can be sure he has prey. He is silent when stalking other game. If you hear a young lion in his den you can be sure he is devouring something. If a bird is caught in a snare it is because the trigger (gin) was set; if you see a trapper run to take up his snare it is because he has caught something. A trumpet is sounded in a city when danger approaches. It is a signal for the people to run for cover. In the same manner when one of God's prophets speaks, you can be sure there is a reason. God no more speaks aimlessly through his prophets than a watchman blows his trumpet for his own entertainment.

The expression "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" is only one facet of the argument. The term agreed is from *yaad*, which Strongs' Exhaustive Concordance says is a primitive root. It is defined "To fix upon (by agreement or appointment); to summon (to trial), to direct (in a certain quarter or position), to engage (for marriage)." It is obvious that the point under consideration is that when you see two people walking together, it is the result of an appointment to meet at a stated time. The purpose of the meeting is not under consideration. They might meet to debate their differences as they walk along together, but the fact they are walking along together, indicates an agreement to meet. They had an appointment.

It is possible in our thickly populated areas of today, that one might run into an acquaintance and walk along with him, but Amos did not live in such an area. J. R. Dummelow, M. A., in his comment on the passage says, "R. V. 'Have agreed,' have an appointment. If two people were seen walking together in the desolate regions with which Amos was familiar it might be assumed they had not met by chance. Nothing happens by chance. There is a reason and cause for Israel's calamities.

There is not one thing in the definition given by Strong which has to do with absolute agreement as two people walk together. The original word relates to an initial agreement to meet, regardless of the purpose. It does not cover the period of marriage, but relates to the engagement; it does not cover the trial in court, but relates only to the summons; it does not cover the purpose of the meeting, but merely an agreement upon time or place. I might agree to meet my dentist at a certain time, and we might be together by appointment. But that does not argue that I am in harmony with all of his views upon technique. I'm not!

I do not argue that absolute conformity upon all matters of interpretation is not an ideal for which we should labor. I do argue that it is not a prerequisite to fellowship in the Lord. We do not come into relationship with the Christ because we understand every point of theology, but because we have come into Him, we seek to reach a greater degree of mutual understanding. We are not in fellowship because of complete unanimity of opinion but in spite of our divergencies of opinion. We walk together because we have made an appointment with Him to do so. If we wait until we get together upon all of our varying opinions, we will never walk together at all!

God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us, has quickened us together, raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:4-6). We are together because of grace, the undeserved

kindness of God. We walk with God and He walks with us and in us. Is this conditioned upon our perfect understanding of all things as God sees them? If God can walk together with me while I am learning, seeking, searching, and yearning to know more about His will, can I not walk with all others in Him who are in the same condition? Jesus walked with two disciples on the way to Emmaus, and asked them, "What is this conversation which you are holding with each other as you walk?" After hearing their stumbling explanation, he said to them, "O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken," and beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures concerning himself. Will He who then walked with foolish men who were slow to believe all that was spoken, refuse to do so now? Or, will His gentle grace abide with us, through His Spirit, that our hearts too may burn within us while He talks with us on the road?

God's purpose as to ourselves has not yet been perfected. It cannot be as it pertains to each individual, until the individual reaches the ultimate in his spiritual attainment. The temple of God is a growing structure. Each generation finds it reaching outward and upward. The ropes are lengthened and the stakes are strengthened. It is not static, but active. Strangers and foreigners become fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God. These are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Jesus is the chief cornerstone. In Him "the whole structure is joined together, and grows into a holy temple in the Lord" (Eph. 2:21). The act of joining the stones together is a divine one; the act of growth is a natural one, aided by the Spirit. Growth always indicates change and adjustment. We must make that in order to fit more fully into the plan of Him "in whom you are builded together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit." The fellowship is the joint participation in the Christ which makes us a part of the building. We are held together, not because of ability, genius, attainment, accomplishment, or opinion, but by the cement of love. That cement allows for soul expansion as "we grow up in every way

into him, who is the head, into Christ" (Eph. 4:15). How shall we treat each other while we are growing?

In the Beginning

Thoughts on Fellowship (5)

Contents

The divided state of believers in the Messiah is one of the most tragic blights upon our modern world. It is the chief deterrent to the subjection of this alien world to our King. We must face up to the full implications of this condition, for we will not escape in the final judgment, any personal responsibility for creating or perpetuating it. We dare not slight or try to ignore the situation. This fact was clearly recognized by our forefathers and they sought to alleviate and eliminate the sectarian status. Thus Alexander Campbell wrote:

"Tired of new creeds and new parties in religion, and of the numerous abortive efforts to reform the reformation; convinced from the Holy Scriptures, from observation and experience, that the union of the disciples of Christ is essential to the conversion of the world, and that the correction and improvement of no creed or partisan establishment in Christendom could ever become the basis of such an union, communion, and cooperation as would restore peace to a church militant against itself, or triumph to the common salvation— a few individuals, about the commencement of the present century, began to reflect upon the ways and means to restore primitive Christianity."

The resultant effort amazes every student of the history of the church of God. Sectarian citadels were shaken to their very foundations. Those who were "tired of new creeds and new parties in religion" imbued with an unquenchable desire for

unity in order to achieve the purpose of the Messiah upon earth, attained such goals as made it appear that this whole nation might be brought to the foot of the cross. Of the fierce ambition which burned within the hearts of these worthies, Campbell wrote:

"Next to our personal salvation, two objects constituted the *summum bonum*, the supreme good, worthy of the sacrifice of all temporalities. The first was, the union, peace, purity, and harmonious cooperation of Christians— guided by an understanding enlightened by the Holy Scriptures; the other, the conversion of sinners to God. Our predilections and antipathies on all religious questions arose from, and were controlled by these all absorbing interests. From these commenced our campaign against creeds."

It is interesting to note the simple way by which it was proposed to unite all Christians. We quote again from Campbell:

"A deep and abiding impression that the power, the consolation and joys— the holiness and happiness— of Christ's religion were lost in the forms and ceremonies, in the speculations and conjectures; in the feuds and bickerings of sects and schisms, originated a project many years ago for uniting the sects, or rather the Christians in all the sects, upon a clear and simple bond of union; upon having a 'thus saith the Lord' either in express terms, or in approved precedent, 'for every item of faith and of religious practice' . . . making faith in Christ and obedience to him, the only test of Christian character, and the only bond of church union, communion and co-operation."

What is the present status of those who are spiritual heirs of the "few individuals who began to reflect upon the ways and means to restore primitive Christianity?" Are they tired of new parties in religion? Are they seeking to restore peace to a church militant against itself? Do they still look upon the union, peace

and harmonious co-operation of Christians, as an object of supreme good? Do they deem this object worthy of the sacrifice of all temporalities? Are they yet laboring on the project of uniting the Christians in all of the sects?

Far from it! They have been enticed into the business of producing sects. The noble ideal has been shattered. There are more than two dozen splinter parties which have grown out of the restoration effort. Each of these claims to be the one holy, catholic and apostolic church. Each contends that it alone is the kingdom of heaven. Each one is "the brotherhood." Each one is "the loyal church." There is no project to unite the Christians in all of the sects, for each sect claims, like Rome, to have all the Christians there are under its inconsistent wings. This is the bread upon which we have been fed, this is the factional milk we have drawn from the paps of our factional religious mothers, and upon it we have been nurtured and nourished into spiritual dwarfs of bigotry, hate and exclusiveness, which say, "Stand by thyself, come not near unto me, for I am holier than thou" (Isa. 65:5).

Physical dwarfs sometimes develop warped personalities. In a world of men of normal stature they must be over-assertive, pugnacious, resentful of every imaginary slight. They must walk with a swagger, cultivate a deep voice, and growl at every one else. Napoleon, the little Corsican, set out to capture the world, to prove his power despite his diminutive stature. The same psychological reaction may be characteristic of spiritual dwarfs. Little men may appear big if they can rationalize all others into inferiority. A small faction can appear of tremendous importance if its members can be made to believe they constitute the sole survivors of the Israel of God, and are the exclusive recipients of God's grace, while every other person on the face of the earth is doomed to damnation because he does not see eye to eye with them on every minute point of practice. But such delusions of grandeur are fatal to the intellect and deadly to the heart.

Indicative of the effect of such attitudes is the wresting of certain scriptures which may be twisted to justify schism and the party spirit in direct contradiction of those passages which forbid and condemn it. Men now love the party spirit. They advocate disunity and preach division among brethren. Under such circumstances any passage which seems to condone separation is seized upon with joyful abandon. As an example I cite Ephesians 5:11, which says, "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." Brethren seem to be overjoyed that they find here the expression "Have no fellowship." All they need to do is to make the term "works of darkness" elastic enough to cover the item currently in dispute, and another division is born.

A short time hence I was in correspondence with a brother who was contending that one could not scripturally engage in the Lord's Supper, except with fermented wine. He was bitterly partisan. I asked him for the scriptural ground upon which he made this a test of fellowship. He merely wrote down in big letters Ephesians 5:11, underlining it twice. Upon such ignorance of the intent of God's plan or purpose a new sect is introduced into the strife-torn religious world.

Did Paul who wrote in one verse instructing the congregation at Ephesus to manifest "all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love," write in another verse for the same brethren to fracture into splinter parties over opinions and preferences? Did he who wrote, "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," write again to the same group to "have no fellowship?" Even a cursory examination of the context would demonstrate the folly of any such interpretation.

"Have no fellowship with the unfaithful ***works of darkness!*****" Are these works to be interpreted to refer to classes to study the Bible, individual cups, leavened bread on the Lord's Table, orphan homes, and other such matters? Brethren should not**

add the stigma of being ridiculous to that of factionalism? Whether the things enumerated, or a score of others in the same category, are right or wrong, this passage is not even remotely related to them. "The works of darkness" in verse 11 are the "things done in secret" in verse 12. These refer to the indescribable vices and licentious practices of the mystery cults of the Gentile world. Under cover of darkness and in the inner recesses and secret chambers of idol temples such gross sensuality was engaged in that the depth of depravity can hardly be fathomed by minds not attuned to base immorality.

Fornication, unchastity and idolatry debar from inheritance in the kingdom (verse 5). These things bring the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience (verse 6). Because of these considerations the disciples were not to be partakers with them (verse 7). The state in which they existed had been changed. The apostle said, "You were sometimes darkness." Once they were steeped in idolatry and all of its filthy and abominable practices. "Now ye are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light." To get a true picture of the darkness of which the apostle writes, one need only read Romans 1:21-32 and ponder the significance of the statement, "God gave them over to a reprobate mind."

Now to apply these passages to those in the realm of Christendom who are of a different order than ourselves and cite them as *the basis* **for a refusal to be partakers with them in their rituals and worship is to stultify any claim we make to fairness as scholars of the sacred oracles. There may be, and there are, good and sufficient reasons why we cannot endorse, assist or participate in the religious performances of many about us, but they do not fall within the category of characters described by Paul. The divided state of believers in Christ is a sad and dreary thing to contemplate, yet in every sect and segment, there are good men and noble, those who are pure, chaste and holy in life. We owe much to the scholarship of such men in the Church of England, Methodist, Baptist, and Quaker**

communions, as well as others. It ill becomes us to accept the fruit of ripe research from their hands, and then bite the hand from which we take it.

Please observe that we are now dealing with whether or not such people are *Christians*. Our present treatise does not concern what they *are,* so much as what they are not. And we affirm that they are not the type of characters to whom Paul alludes in this passage. No sincere believer in the Messiah, who is morally above reproach falls under this condemnation. To assume that a man is degraded or degenerate because he honestly disagrees with us upon the subject of baptism, for example, is a greater reflection against our reasoning powers than against his. Many of my neighbors are members of the Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist and other protestant sects, which today portray so graphically the deplorable state of division into which the world has fallen. But they are not walking in the darkness of which Paul wrote, nor do they have fellowship with the unfruitful works which he contemplated.

Theirs is the wrong of perpetuating a party to the division of God's people. This is a work of the flesh. But there is a difference in the influence upon society and the moral tone of the world in some of these works, as every logical reasoner must admit. Moreover, many of the adherents of the various religious parties are to an extent innocent victims of birth, environment and other circumstances beyond their control. And many love the truth, seek after it, and sigh for a greater knowledge of it. They pray for the unity of the church of God and long for a better day for Zion.

A person in one of the numerous sects of Christendom today may be a child of God, or he may not. That is also true of those who are in "The Church of Christ." Certainly one who is a child of God and still attached to a sect or party, is a child of God *and something else*. The mere fact that a man is in the Baptist party does not argue that he is not a child of God, but he

may be a child of God *and a Baptist*, in the partisan sense of that term. I am a baptist, but not a Baptist. Our task is not to deny that he is a child of God, but to get him to cease being a partisan, for the party spirit is a sin. The dividing of God's children into schismatic groups labeled by partisan names, designed to keep them apart, is sinful. God wants all of His children to be one in Christ. All who are truly His children are dedicated to the destruction of all religious parties, regardless of which one they may be associated with at present. A follower of the Lamb cannot condone, defend, uphold or perpetuate the party spirit. If he finds himself in a human party, he must either transform it or come out of it, if it's impossible of reformation.

We must be careful that in our opposition to the party spirit we are not mere partisans. I am fully convinced that many of my brethren are opposing sectism from a sectarian standpoint. They are interested in getting people out of "their sect" and into "our sect." Of course they would not admit that, but that is what it amounts to. No doubt they are honest in their endeavor for they too are the victims of the circumstances of birth, training and environment. Some feel that sectism cannot exist in a religious body bearing the name "Church of Christ." They think it serves as an amulet or charm with special powers for exorcising the demon of sectism. But some of the most partisan and bigoted sectarians in our modern world operate under that title. The very usage of the term in a segregatory and separationist fashion is indicative of the sectarian spirit.

There was a "Christ party" at Corinth. They were condemned in the same language as those who called themselves after the name of Paul, or Cephas, or Apollos. It is just as sinful to divide the body of Christ by saying, "We belong to Christ," with the intent to separate yourselves from other brethren, as to say, "We belong to Paul," for the same purpose. It was to the members of this party that Paul wrote, "Look these facts in the face. If any man is fully persuaded as regards himself that he belongs to Christ, let him consider again with himself, that just

as he is Christ's, so also am I" (2 Cor. 10:7).

Paul had accepted the Good News and been immersed into the Lord, and he did not propose to be dispossessed of his citizenship by those who claimed to belong to Christ in a special way, because they had formed an exclusive party wearing the name "Christ" to distinguish them from other persons who had been immersed into Jesus. There are scattered sheep on the hills of sectarianism today who could say to those calling themselves "The Church of Christ," as Paul said, "Let them consider again, that just as they are Christ's so also are we." God's children have not all been gleaned from Babylon yet, and it will not help to wall off a little segment of Babylon and label it "Jerusalem."

What is the essential equipment for those who would help answer the prayer of Jesus for unity of all who believe in Him through the testimony of the apostles? It is possible that we cannot detail all that is required. We have exercised such poor personal judgment in the past, and have so often mistaken the factional spirit for the spirit of righteousness, that we may be in a poor state to make suggestions. However, in humility and sincerity we mention the following as attributes of him who would walk toward the greatest goal that can challenge the thinking of the slaves of God on earth.

1. A firm and unshakable conviction that sectism is a sin, a work of the flesh, and will keep all who wilfully indulge in it out of the kingdom of heaven.

2. The ability to distinguish between the person and the party to which he belongs. Many are attached to sects who are not sectarian. Wholesale denunciation without recognition of the varying attitudes and degrees of knowledge is unwise and unreasonable.

3. A rigid determination to be non-partisan and to call upon all men to rally to the cross, that at this common center we

may become truly one in the only One who has a right to draw all men unto himself.

4. A spirit of forbearance and patience while men are learning. The road from Babylon to Jerusalem will not be covered in a day. Let us be content to contribute our little bit to the great work of the ages, and He who made the ages will weave it into His pattern so the thread will not be lost. No one of us can develop the whole pattern of God for the whole world in his lifetime.

5. A love of truth for truth's sake, which will crucify within us the dogmatic spirit, and make us realize that our intellectual "Geiger counters" may indicate a rich deposit of heaven's precious ore in areas where our human wisdom would cause us to pass by and leave unexplored. Let us prospect every inch of ground for truth.

Thoughts on Fellowship (6)

Contents

Fellowship in Christ is that blessed and glorious state or relationship into which we are called by the gospel. All who are immersed into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, as believing penitents are in that fellowship. We are holy *brethren* because we share in a heavenly call (Heb. 3:1). We are fellowheirs and members of the same body, because we are partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel (Eph. 3:6). In view of this we are to live "in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together we may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 15:6). In order to do this we must "welcome one another, as Christ has welcomed us, for the glory of God" (Romans 15:7).

We are joined and knit together as a body (Eph. 4:16). We have access in the one Spirit to the Father (Eph. 2:18). We must be "eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" seeing that there is only one body and one Spirit (Eph. 4:3). So long as the Holy Spirit dwells in any man he is bound by an invisible cord to heaven; and by the same token, he is bound to every other person in whom the Spirit abides. This is "the fellowship of the Spirit" (Phil 2:1). It is created by the Spirit, and it is maintained by the Spirit. Any alliance of those who are not indwelt of the Spirit is a selfish and useless one. Any fellowship that is of the Spirit is at once meaningful and active.

Because we sustain that relationship we are urged to

"complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind" (verse 2). We complete the joy of the apostle when we are able to walk and work together in the same mind. This does not mean to be of the same opinion. It does not mean that we are cut out by a kind of divine cookie cutter. But we have the mind of Christ. We do not come into the fellowship because we are of the same mind, or have the same love but we come to be of the same mind and have the same love, because we are in the fellowship. It is the beautiful garden in which we "grow up into Him in all things." It is the atmosphere in which we "grow in grace and in knowledge of the truth." God brings us into fellowship through grace; we grow together by mutual eagerness to maintain that unity.

One of the greatest tragedies of this age has been the lack of eagerness to maintain unity. There has been an eagerness to divide. It has become almost an obsession. It is a passion which engulfs us and fragments us, but there seems to be a decided reluctance to unite. Men have no fear of separation, but live in mutual dread of ending it. Nowhere does the word of God counsel division among believers. In scores of passages unity is urged. Yet we could not be more divided if the word of God had commanded it. No one is so unpopular in some circles today as he who speaks for unity. Brethren take counsel together to stop the mouth of one who pleads for it, and if they cannot stop his mouth, they stop their ears.

This is the sad state to which Christendom is reduced by our littleness, fears, frustration, bigotry and hatred. Is it any wonder that under such circumstances we seek and earnestly look for scriptural warrant for our ungodly procedure? We are a Bible believing people. We have boasted so long that we do nothing without scriptural backing. So it becomes necessary that we search the scriptures to justify what we are doing. We have charted our course by ourselves; we must alter God's chart and map to condone it. We now place a ban upon unity and a blessing upon division. "Woe unto them that call evil good, and

good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight" (Isa. 5:20).

Think of the frightful cleavages that invest the realm of Christendom. If you disregard the great division between Romanism and Protestantism, and regard only the latter as filling the nominal Christian domain, behold the almost three hundred sects and cults which cumber our own fair country. If you restrict your narrowed vision to the heirs of the restoration movement, you must contemplate no less than twenty-five splinter parties, each one belaboring all of the others as sects and factions. Nor is the end yet, for the germ of the seed which has produced this state is not dead or dormant, and there must follow more division, factionism, strife, contention and bitter debate. We will bequeath to our children and our children's children a legacy of hate and intolerance, so they will bite and devour one another, and long after our bones moulder in the earth, the feuds will go on and damn our offspring to the flames of hell. With all of our modern skills and scientific acumen we have not yet solved the problem of how all believers in Christ can be one. Is it any wonder we cannot solve our national and international problems? The greatest challenge to Christendom today is to find an answer to the prayer of Jesus. There has to be one!

Those who love God and revere His word will seek for the answer in that word. But they must learn how to handle it properly. It is a sword, and such a weapon in an unskilled hand may slay more friends than enemies. We want to deal in this essay with one passage of scripture which we have used in a factional sense. It has been used over and over to create and widen schisms in the body of the Lord. We refer to 2 John 9, 10. "If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him Godspeed, for he that biddeth him Godspeed is partaker of his evil deeds." This is the

handle that has been shaped to fit every factional tool man has invented. It is the seasoning which flavors every partisan pot.

In Tennessee, a man reaches the conclusion that it is a sin to teach little children the word of God in a Bible class in the meetinghouse. This is made his party test of loyalty to Jesus. "If any man bring not *this doctrine*, receive him not." In Texas, a man decides that the fruit of the vine must be passed to the congregation in one container. To do otherwise would be to negate the value of even partaking of the Supper. This is made his party test and "if any man bring not *this doctrine*, receive him not." In the same factional strain, one in his congregation concludes that the fruit of the vine passed in one container must be fermented. This becomes his party test, and "if anyone bring not *this doctrine*, receive him not."

To one "this doctrine" means a special way of breaking the bread, to another it refers to the support of orphan homes, to another our relation to civil government, to another it has to do with certain regulations of marriage. But whatever the party test, one must bring *this doctrine*, or he is an outcast, and must be given the cold shoulder, disregarded as a brother and treated like a pagan. Schools have arisen to be identified with one facet or another of *this doctrine*, and the students go forth gleefully preaching their peculiarity and fragmenting the body of Christ with gusto.

Did the apostle of love intend to create such a conglomerate mess as we now behold? Did he who wrote that "we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" also give instruction to club the life out of them or to drive them forth when they could not conscientiously agree with some childish point of interpretation? Did he who said "Any one who hates his brother is a murderer," provide us with a verbal dagger by which to stab our brethren to death doctrinally? Did he who condemned Diotrephes because "he refuses to welcome the brethren, and stops those who want to welcome them and puts

them out of the church," lay down a principle which would propagate the Diotrephesian cult in every congregation? Did the holy apostle initiate the beginning of a Russian-type purge which would make every congregation the lurking-ground for fright and terror? Was he referring to individual cups, Bible classes, leavened bread, fermented wine, a special method of breaking the loaf, orphan homes, colleges, radio programs, instrumental music, tuning forks, baptisteries, collection plates, and a host of other items too numerous to mention? Was this a concealed blast against the congregational support of Herald of Truth whether such support is justified or not?

Whatever *this doctrine* **was, the man who did not bring it was not to be welcomed when he came, nor speeded on his way with good wishes when he left. We are of the opinion that we can only understand what John was talking about in consideration of the background and circumstances under which he wrote. John spent his final days in Ephesus, laboring in the vicinity of Asia Minor. Ephesus was the home of Cerinthus, a Jew who studied in Alexandria, and who is credited with being the original propagator of the theory which was destined eventually to divide almost every congregation in the Greek world. He was a contemporary with John. It is a conviction of ours that John was spared to deal the death blow to this cult of Greek mysticism, even as Paul was destined to save the church from the inroads of legalism derived from a mistaken idea of the role of Judaism in God's plan.**

The first and second epistles of John were written to deal with this problem. No one can rightfully understand them if he ignores this fact. We cannot here enter into a full analysis of Gnosticism, its origins, nature and effects. The word is from the Greek *gnosis***, i. e., "Knowledge." Paul alludes to it in warning Timothy to avoid "the contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge (gnosis)" and affirms that "by professing it some have missed the mark as regards to the faith" (1 Timothy 6:20). Timothy was in Ephesus, which was "the eye of the storm" when**

that was written to him. Although, because of its speculative nature, gnosticism finally took many forms, it generally denied the pre-existence of the Son of God in some fashion. It clearly affirmed that he did not come in the flesh.

Cerinthus taught that God was exalted above all contact with the world of nature and sense, that the world was created by angels, and presided and ruled over by one of them, who was the Sovereign and lawgiver of the Jews. He affirmed that Jesus was born of Joseph and Mary by the natural process of birth, and developed and grew in such a degree of wisdom, and of favor with God and man, that he was deemed to be worthy of divine honor. At his baptism by John, the Logos, that is, the divine wisdom and energy, descended upon him, thus making him the Christ (the anointed one). By this supernatural endowment of the divine *pneuma* he was permitted to work miracles and reveal the divine purpose, which the Logos could penetrate. Cerinthus further taught that when Jesus was arrested, the Logos left him and returned to the Father, so it was just the man who died, and not God, or the Son of God. It was affirmed that man could not kill God and that anyone who could be killed thereby proved he was not God. One who is familiar with the teachings of the Jehovah's witness cult will at once recognize the similarity in their doctrine and that of the Gnostics.

John wrote to refute this dangerous theory which had already infiltrated most of the congregations during his lifetime. It was aided and abetted by the philosophic turn of mind of most Gentile converts. This will explain many of the statements and emphases in his gospel record. The great representative of the Alexandrian school was Philo. He was contemporary with Jesus and was born about a quarter of a century before him. In attempting to synthesize a system which would bring together the best in Aristotelian philosophy with Christianity, he affirms that God is the absolute, eternal and invisible Being. This God is separated from the material universe by an abyss which

excludes all idea of immediate contact.

He was not the creator of matter. Matter existed from all eternity. It was not permitted, it was not possible, for the blessed God to come in contact with matter. He has arranged the universe by means of the *Logos*, which is represented, now as one, now as manifold, and in which the Mosaic creative word, the King of Israel's personification of wisdom, and Plato's world of ideas appear to coalesce. So John starts out in his account of the Good News with the affirmation, "In the beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was with God, and the Logos was God." One can only imagine what a controversy this aroused. It was like throwing a lighted brand into a barrel of gunpowder.

But he then declares that "The Logos *became flesh* and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). The idea that the *Logos* came and brought his own tent with him cut across all of the philosophic brilliance of that day. It was impossible, according to the philosophic idea that God could become material, for all matter was essentially and inherently evil by nature. So John begins his first epistle by asserting that he had personal audible, manual and visible witness of the word of life, that this life had pre-existence with the Father, was manifested to the witnesses, and proclaimed to others so they might also have fellowship with the proclaimers, the Father and His Son Jesus Christ (1 John 1:1-3). The message of the proclaimers was that *God is light!* To say that one has fellowship with God while denying the manifestation of God (in Jesus Christ) is only to lie, and to walk in darkness. "To walk in the Light" (i. e., to be in God) is to be in fellowship with one another and in contact with the cleansing power of the Son of God (1:5-7).

No one can be in the light (that is in God) who is not in the Son, for they sustain a divine relationship. "No one who denies the Son has the Father. He who confesses the Son has the Father also . . . If what you have heard from the beginning abide in you, then you will abide in the Son and in the Father. And this is

what he has promised us, eternal life" (2:23-25). What was it they had heard from the beginning which must abide in them, so they could abide in God? "*The life was made manifest, and we saw it* **. . . and proclaim to you the eternal life which was with the Father and was made manifest unto us."**

To say one is in fellowship with the Father while denying the pre-existence and revelation of the Son makes one a liar (1:6). "Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son" (2:22). There are many kinds of liars, but the one with whom John was dealing while writing this epistle was the one who denied the Messiahship of Jesus. The Gnostic was not a follower of Jesus, but an antichrist. These men had created a party or heresy, for we read, "They went out from us because they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us, but they went out that it might be plain that they were not of us" (2:19).

The saints were not to believe every spirit. They were to test the spirits, because many false prophets were abroad. The criterion was simple. "Every spirit which confesses that Jesus is come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit which does not confess Jesus is not of God." By this the Spirit of God could be identified (4:1-3). "Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God" (4:15). "Every one who believes that Jesus is the Christ is a child of God, and every one who loves the parent loves the child. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and obey his commandments" (5:1, 2).

We are now ready to appreciate 2 John. It was written to a sister in the Lord. Some of her children were followers of the truth (verse 4). The congregation may have met in her house. John wrote the same thing to her in verses 5 and 6 that he wrote in 1 John 2:7-9. He tells her that many deceivers have gone out into the world (verse 7) as he previously had said, "Many false

prophets have gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1). He identifies these as "men who will not acknowledge the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh" (Cp verse 7 with 1 John 4:3) and labels them in both instances as "antichrist."

In verse 9, he tells the sister, "Any one who goes ahead and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God; he who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son." The doctrine of Christ is the testimony "that the Father has sent His Son as the Savior of the world" (1 John 4:14), that is, that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh (4:2). Those who go ahead and do not abide in this conviction do not love God, but those who retain this conviction, have both the Father and the Son. As phrased in 1 John 2:23, "No one who denies the Son has the Father. He who confesses the Son has the Father also." To "deny the Son" in this expression is equivalent to the expression "does not abide in the doctrine of Christ" in the other place.

The instruction is "if any one comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into the house, or give him any greeting: for he who greets him shares his wicked work." The abuse of this passage by men motivated by a partisan spirit is indescribable in its awful effects; only eternity will reveal the tragic loss of souls caused by such abuse. It has been quoted to justify driving out into the cold those humble souls who would not bow to clerical domination; it is the whiplash that has cut into the hearts of sincere believers in the Lord who would not do abject obeisance to an arbitrary interpretation of some despotic and tyrannical faction. It is the sword that has spilled the blood of the saints, the axe that has wrecked the house of God; and the rude hand that has torn the fabric of fellowship into a hundred bits and flung the pieces into the face of Christ of Calvary who died that we might be one in Him. Dear Lord, forgive us the sin of mistaking zeal for your kingdom with the blood lust of the sectarian spirit! Let us know your will.

Most of our brethren are better than their creeds. Their hearts transcend their practices. They will not only receive into their houses those to whom they profess to apply this scripture, but will ardently canvass a community seeking to get them to come. They bring in a bevy of eager-beaver college students to work the area and get as many as possible to attend. They put out flyers and stick advertisements in the paper with the blatant notice "Everyone Welcome!" They compass land and sea to make one proselyte.

In their preaching they do not hesitate to apply 2 John 9, 10 to a preacher who believes in instrumental music. He is guilty of the Number One sin. Yet, when one attends he is greeted with a toothy grin and a huge smile and given an old-fashioned down home greeting. An usher will scamper half way across the auditorium to give him a songbook open to the proper hymn. He is encouraged to "participate in the worship" along with other sinners who are present. However, if someone makes the mistake of calling on him to lead in prayer, it creates a furor of gossip, and the man who did it will lose his job, for compromising truth with error. It is alright to pray provided you have a tune to it, but it is wrong to do so to four-four time without a melody attached.

Such is the mixed-up mess and the messed-up mix to which our puerile reasoning has brought us. We could not be farther from the truth or more hypocritical in our application of it, if it were God's will. The book plainly tells us not to receive into the house a false teacher of the kind John had in mind. It specifically tells us to give him no greeting. Whoever you apply the first part to, you are obligated to apply the second part to. I do not believe that most of our brethren are willing to apply the remedy prescribed to one whom they have diagnosed as needing it. I have never seen them give "the bum's rush" to one who disagreed with them. I have seen them argue with one until after midnight, with everyone so sleepy no one was really listening. The only one I have ever seen conducted to the door and sent on

his wobbly way was an occasional drunk who was staggering by and dropped in to take a rear seat and start crying in his suds.

The thing that strikes most of the brethren is the phrase "Receive him not!" It is right down their alley. This furnishes them the right to reject anyone who is bold or simple enough to assert an opinion contrary to the unwritten creed. It affords them ground for renouncing the scripture which says, "Accept one another, then, for the glory of God, as Christ has accepted you" (Romans 15:7). For the glory of God. If it is to God's glory to accept all whom He has accepted it contravenes His glory not to do so. But our brethren are selective. If a really prominent Baptist, one who has been president of a Baptist school, shows an interest, they can get together in a back room and agree to spirit him in on his previous baptism. A run-of-the-mill, common, everyday, garden variety Baptist will have to be baptized "scripturally," that is by one of our preachers, to get into the Lord's church. Politics make for strange bedfellows, and strange bedfellows make for politics.

Men may have God, and God may have men, who sincerely differ on Bible classes, individual cups, leavened or unleavened bread, fermented or unfermented wine, lesson leaves, baptisteries, and a host of other things. Men may abide in the "doctrine of Christ" of which John speaks, and hold conflicting views about implementation of God's will for us in this age. It is a matter of our attitude toward truth. But those who split, tear and rend the body of God's Son, then try to call heaven's blessing upon their destructive ways, by quoting as justification, "If any come and bring not this doctrine, do not receive him into your house, nor give him a greeting," are the real factionists and troublers of Israel. Such a spirit is more dangerous to the well-being of the church of God than some "innovations."

Those who profess to be defenders of the faith, those who pose as champions of orthodoxy may be intolerant advocates of

unwritten human creeds. We are not apologists for error, nor do we excuse divisions in Christ, of those who are earnestly striving to know His will, but we do not propose to settle our problems by driving out of the house our brethren who disagree. We shall not throw the baby out with the bath water! The members of the present factions and dissident groups need to get on their knees before the Savior lest they be forced to do so before the Judge of all the earth. It is time to repent. Reformation must precede true restoration. Let us all love the brethren, and in that spirit resolve that we shall end factionism and party strife. The night is far spent, the day is at hand!

Thoughts on Fellowship (7)

Contents

Dr. Erich Lindemann, while directing clinical work at Massachusetts General Hospital made an epochal discovery. He specialized in research with patients suffering from mental and physical illness induced by grief and sorrow. Many of these developed severe sickness or depression years after the loss of a loved one. The researchist uncovered the basic fact that to repress feelings of grief may lead to morbid and abnormal relations later on. In our modern culture, the idea has obtained that emotional outbursts are to be avoided, and that one should be ashamed of tears and paroxysms of sorrow. Psychiatry has now discovered that expression of grief is a healing process for the soul, while repression of sorrow leaves wounds and scars on the fabric of life. Joshua Loth Liebman, in his book *Peace of Mind*, points out how the Bible long ago taught this elemental truth and cites the open and unashamed expression of sorrow by Abraham, Jacob and David as examples.

This is but one case among many where men have discovered that the real teaching of the Bible is in direct contradiction to the accepted view and common practice. We are glad when men like Dr. Lindemann find the solution to problems of mental stress and depression, so they can help the victims of emotional disturbance to have a happier existence. During the 1940's and 1950's groups of psychiatrists and students of mental health began experimenting with music to soothe their patients. Apparently this development began independently in several

mental health centers almost at the same time, and thus constitutes another case of what might be called simultaneous invention.

Great and dramatic results were reported by various researchers. Some noted specialists feel that in some patients it can have an effect which transcends that of any drug they can administer. Yet, in the Bible, we read of the same treatment in the case of Saul, who showed openly signs of being a schizophrenic of the worst kind. But the Bible records the first instance of the use of music in such a case of a disturbed personality. "It came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well and the evil spirit departed from him" (1 Sam. 16:23).

We believe that the Bible has long held the answer to a problem which has vexed and plagued the disciple brotherhood. It has been there all of the time but our very familiarity with the Book has drawn cataracts across our eyes and obscured our vision. The problem is that of division, strife and factionalism, with all the kindred ills which attend it. It is everywhere manifest and is detrimental to the achievement of the purpose of restoration, the unity of all believers in the Christ. The answer is simple, but it is exactly opposite to the generally accepted position. That the present view is not achieving the proper purpose is evident in the fact that factions are multiplying and the possibility of unity recedes farther into the distance with each passing year.

The discovery we are going to mention can revolutionize our lives, revitalize the restoration movement, recharge our spiritual batteries and change our whole relationship to the religious world. It can make us apostles of world brotherhood in the van of a great movement to lead mankind to a closer walk with God and with each other. But it is so simple you may be inclined to underestimate it and overlook its power-packed

vitality. You will need to think upon it for a long time before the full potential dawns upon you. You will need to understand what a tremendous change it can work in your own life and practice by transforming your attitude and altering your perspective. The unlimited possibilities it will provide will be in direct contrast to the spiritually restricted life which has been yours. Through grasp of this great truth God will open up for you "a great door and effectual." Read what follows carefully and thoughtfully. Let the words trickle down into your consciousness.

*Fellowship in Christ is not the result of our agreement upon matters of opinion and interpretation; but our agreement upon things comes as result of our fellowship***.**

Do you ask what is so great about that? First, it is the exact reverse of what most of us have been taught and have taught. It may, therefore, produce unity where our previous attitude has produced division and disunity. It is obvious that our past course has produced grievous disorders in the ranks of the spiritual. We have been looking for something which cannot and does not exist outside of Christ, as the very ground for our proper association in Him.

Second, it begins with fellowship and ends with agreement; whereas we have been trying to start with agreement and work toward fellowship. But it has been impossible to agree because we have had an improper attitude toward each other. We have regarded each other as aliens, enemies and opponents. We have been suspicious of each other. We have been fearful of one another. We have credited each other with false motivations. In this spirit the area of disagreement has widened. Fellowship has been thrust further away. We thought that we could not love each other as brethren until we agreed, yet we could not agree until we loved each other as brethren. This produced an impasse with a new faction given birth almost every year.

It would seem that if a doctor tried the same prescription time after time, and each time the patient died, he would want to begin to change. Common sense would seem to dictate to us that we are abject failures in one of the greatest enterprises upon earth, and that if we continue to pursue our present course we will end up hating one another and spiritually bankrupt. There simply has to be a better way than the one we have taken. It has led us in all of the wrong places.

Third, this places our fellowship in proper perspective. It makes it infinitely greater than any matter of interpretation or any difference of opinion. In the past even minor opinions have been deemed greater than fellowship. As a result fellowship has been sacrificed at every disagreement. The body has been cleaved asunder every time a wart appeared. In reality, there is room for differences and disagreements inside the circle of fellowship, provided the royal law of love is not forgotten or forsaken. As it is, this sovereign principle has been disregarded and dethroned every time there has arisen a disagreement. Love is the spiritual law of gravity which draws us toward a common center. So long as it is operative, we all may differ greatly on many things, and still remain in the domain of Christ, even as men may differ in the political world and still remain citizens of the United States.

Fourth, fellowship is attained at once through the grace of God, while agreement upon spiritual implications and interpretations may be the work of years, and achieved only through intensive study and mutual intercourse of thought. We are called into the fellowship by God. We arrive at understanding through the exercise of our rational faculties. To recognize that fellowship is a state or relationship into which we are brought by divine power, and to conceive of every immersed believing penitent as being in that relationship, will allow our own spirits to expand and the love of God will then be shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given unto us.

Fifth, this concept, if understood and taught, will assure that not another division will ever occur among those who sincerely love Christ. Moreover, a number of breaches now existing will be healed. We recognize that "there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized" (1 Cor. 11:19). In the past, the genuine ones could not be recognized, because they joined up with one or the other of the factions. We take it that if two parties were created in the church, the genuine ones would not be recognized if they aligned themselves with either. The genuine ones are those who refuse to be factional.

If a congregation is divided into parties over an interpretation of Revelation 20, and there is a pre-millennial and a post-millennial faction formed, the genuine ones, regardless of their views on the millennial question, would recognize all as brethren, and refuse to become partisans in the matter. Those who are genuine exalt Jesus above any opinion and refuse to divide those who are in Him; those who are factional exalt an opinion above Jesus and refuse to recognize those who differ as even being in Him. Our misconception of the New Testament teaching has tended to make more of us factional than genuine!

But what about our guarding of the truth? There is a great difference between guarding the truth and an opinion about the truth. Truth need not be protected. It was given to protect us. It needs to be turned loose and not kept tied up or kept in prison for its own protection. But an opinion about truth is always subject to examination and scrutiny by others. And their opinion may be as good as ours.

Fellowship is not a fruit of agreement but agreement is the fruit of fellowship! **Does the Bible teach that? Do we come to be in the fellowship because we are of the same mind, or do we come to be of one mind because we are in the fellowship? Much depends upon the answer you give. If we come into fellowship by agreement upon opinions, then how many things must we agree**

upon, and which ones, before fellowship commences? If we must agree upon all views and opinions then no fellowship at all exists today for no two persons are wholly agreed. If we need not agree upon all, who is to determine which ones we may eliminate from the area of agreement without impairing fellowship? If we decide which opinions and views we must agree upon to have fellowship, what happens if one learns more on some point and changes his mind? Shall he be put out of the fellowship for "growing in knowledge"? On the basis that fellowship is contingent upon agreement in matters of opinion, no congregation existing a hundred years ago could now be in fellowship, and no congregation now existing would be in the fellowship a hundred years from now if our Lord tarry that long.

No such difficulty is encountered if we regard fellowship in the proper light. Allowance will be made for ignorance on many points a century ago, and for the increase of knowledge a century in the future. Neither ignorance nor growth affect fellowship unless the first is wilful and the second disregards the principle of love. One cannot be too ignorant to be in the fellowship and cannot grow too greatly to be a part of it. There will be room for minds that are liberal and conservative to work together in love, the first lending fresh outlook and new vision, the latter exercising proper restraint to keep the progress within the pale of God's revelation. But is this concept scriptural. We assert that it is!

Every admonition in the New Testament to be of one mind, to agree among yourselves, or to speak the same thing, was given to those who were in fellowship. In no case were brethren told to achieve peace in order to be in fellowship, but, having been called into fellowship, they were to achieve peace. "And above all these put on love which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ dwell in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body" (Col. 3:14, 15). It was those who were in the one body who were to put on love,

and to allow the peace of Christ to rule.

Paul wrote to the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi with their bishops and deacons and instructed them to "Complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love being in full accord and of one mind" (Phil. 2:2). His joy began when they entered the fellowship of Christ. As they grew closer to each other in that area and achieved unity of thought and purpose, his joy and theirs abounded. "I shall remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith" (1:25). On what basis were they told to achieve the same mind, the same love, and full accord? The previous verse hinges its accomplishment upon "encouragement in Christ, the incentive of love, the participation (fellowship) in the Spirit." With such encouragement, incentive and fellowship they were to labor toward unity of thought. But while they were struggling the fellowship was not impaired!

The church of God at Corinth was composed of those who "were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor. 1:9). It was because they were in the fellowship, that the apostle said, "I appeal to you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree that there be no dissensions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and in the same judgment." They were rent into schismatic groups but were still in the fellowship. Paul pleads with all of them *as brethren*, **regardless of the party names they wore. To them all he recommends love as the answer to their predicament, for "love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, endures all things" (13:4-7). Paul rises above all partisanship in this letter. He takes sides with neither group, not even with those who said "We are of Paul." He addresses them all as brethren, and admonishes them "as my beloved children." He says, "Finally, brethren, farewell. Mend your ways, heed my**

appeal, agree with one another, live in peace and the God of peace will be with you" (2 Cor. 13:11).

Let us again state this revolutionary principle. *Fellowship in Christ is not contingent upon agreement upon matters of interpretation and opinion; but agreement in these is contingent upon fellowship*. **What practical changes will be made by recognition and application of this law.**

Perhaps we can best illustrate by example. A group of brethren from another section of the country reared in a different traditional background, and in a congregation which is opposed to Bible classes, move to a northern city to find employment. They find a congregation of saints meeting there and attend with them to break bread. The procedure is different than that which they have been accustomed to and some things are very difficult for them to see. Fortunately, all of them are sincerely motivated by a deep love for Christ.

They meet together in Christian love to discuss the problem. All agree that they are brethren. All recognize that they are in the fellowship, not because of personal agreement, but because of their relationship to God through the Holy Spirit. All resolve not to tear the fabric of fellowship because it is greater than any personal view relative to teaching the Word of the Lord, however dear that view might be to their hearts. They first decide to list and discuss those things in which they stand together, believing that emphasis upon these will lay a more solid foundation for discussion of differences. They find the area of agreement much greater than the area of disagreement, and they concede that it would be foolish to give up this ground which has already been gained in their struggle to possess the small remainder in unity.

All are patient and kind. No one is jealous or boastful. No one is arrogant, rude, irritable or resentful. No one insists upon having his own way. (Read 1 Corinthians 13:4, 5 again). The

brethren who have moved to the city, agree to work with the congregation in every way possible and to allow each one's personal conviction to be the determining factor as to how far he can go in cooperating with the classes for Bible study. As several years pass, their love for each other is deepened through sharing in times of joy and sorrow, prosperity and adversity, health and sickness, and pain and death. Their children have married and they are bound together by ties of affection. The congregation grows so large it is deemed best to plant another.

The brethren who have opposed the grouping of students ask permission to form a new congregation in which they can conduct a teaching program more in conformity with their views. Consent is given and all labor together in planting the new unit. They continue to meet together once per week for mutual study of the word, they exchange physical labor upon the two meetinghouses, and also exchange talent for the purpose of edification. They recognize that because brethren meet in two different places and hold some varying views does not justify disfellowship, and frequent association will mean a closer unity as they come nearer to the ideal of Christ.

Would not such a course be better than the procedure generally followed? Would it not be more consistent with the tenor of the sacred revelation? Then, why have we not acted in this fashion? There is just one answer. "For you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving like ordinary men?" (1 Cor. 3:3). Christians are to be extraordinary men. They are not to be conformed to the world, but transformed by the renewing of their minds. Men of the world quarrel, fight, and separate into cliques and parties. When we do the same, we are conformists to the world. We can only be transformed when our minds are renewed by some great overwhelming, powerful thought. We will never achieve unity by devising ingenious human schemes and drawing up formal professions. The very existence of these testifies to a lack of love.

We are today exactly where our thinking has brought us. We will be tomorrow exactly where our thinking takes us. If we will change the tragic picture of division, desolation and spiritual destruction, we must alter our thinking. So long as we seek to achieve fellowship by agreement upon propositions we will divide every time someone learns a new truth. Unity will not be achieved by external documents and forms. It must come from within. It must probe the deepest thoughts of our hearts. It must plumb the very depths of our beings. It must bubble up through all of the debris of years of wrong thinking and seek the surface of new lives.

We must feel that we are one in Him with every other person who has accepted Him as Lord. That feeling will do more to promote peace, and prove to be a surer bond of lasting union than all of the pacts, concordats and comity agreements men have written. We are in fellowship! We are one in Christ Jesus! We have been raised up together and made to sit together in heavenly places! We were all part of the original redemption agreement. We were all set free by the grace of God. The Holy Spirit dwells within us as a seal of our fellowship with God and with each other. Under the benign influence of that Spirit, let us move closer to having one mind, the same love and full accord. God hasten the day! Peace must be waged, as others wage war and strife.

Thoughts on Fellowship (8)

Contents

Martin Luther wrote about the "church fathers" in these words, "Though they said nothing decisive about justification by grace, yet at their death they believed in it. *The worthy fathers lived better than they wrote*.**" That last sentence is applicable to most of our brethren. Their practice is better than their unwritten creeds. Many secretly believe what I am writing about fellowship. They rejoice that I am saying it. They eagerly await the day when it will become the norm and they can exit from hiding and affirm the same truths which I express.**

Others practice it and just as openly deny it. When they meet a brother, of whatever stripe, outside of their bailiwicks they are the very soul of courtesy and attention. They will climb up beside him on a stool at the local coffee shop and fraternize with him as if the two had no differences on earth. It is only when one is in the pulpit that he feels vulnerable and threatened and must take a hard-nosed position. The same warm and affable person when by himself becomes cold and indifferent when representing the last bastion of faithfulness, as he regards the church which pays him.

The day is coming when more and more brethren will begin to get their eyes open and will free themselves from the frightful bondage of the spirit which holds others aloof. What is now being said will be of such general acceptance that few will remember the need for saying it. There will be those who will hold on for a long time to the legalistic position. They will equate

it with the faith once delivered. But one by one they will come to see it for what it is, a human tradition passed along to curse them by feuding fathers.

Tolbert Fanning, wrote far back in 1844, as follows: "What is the love of the brethren? Perhaps on no subject has the human heart been driven to greater extremes, than what is generally termed love of the brethren. The boundaries of each faction, are usually the limits of the love of the respective denominations; while the deep and abiding hatred of most religionists is limited only by the universe. Romanists love their own; Calvinists love Calvinists; Arminians love not all Arminians, but each Arminian sect rejoices in itself alone. Deep seated party prejudice is the 'love of God' in party religions. Baptists feel in their souls that they love Baptists, and hence fancy that this prejudice is the love of the brethren, and indubitable evidence of a passage from death unto life."

To this poignant statement might well be added in our generation the "Churches of Christ." It is well known that the brotherhood is restricted to those who agree upon certain things which have been elevated to a prominence they do not possess and are made tests of fellowship. Each group has its own brotherhood and there is no such thing as the "brotherhood." If deep seated party prejudice produced this state among those who are not of us, as enumerated by Brother Fanning, pray what produces it among us?

Alanson Wilcox in "A History of the Disciples of Christ in Ohio" relates that in 1804, Barton W. Stone made a trip to Meigs County, Ohio, for the purpose of immersing a Presbyterian preacher named William Caldwell. While there he accepted an invitation of the Separate Baptist Association to preach to them. He says: "The result was that they agreed to cast away their formularies and creeds, and take the Bible alone for their rule of faith and practice; to throw away the name Baptist and to accept the name "Christian," and to bury their

Association, and to become one with us in the great work of Christian union. Then they marched to the stand where we were preaching, shouting the praises of God and proclaiming aloud what they had done. We met them, and embraced each other in Christian love."

That is beautiful and blessed. But it could not happen today. Instead, these brethren would have been rebuked for being disorderly in meeting and would have been met with signed propositions demanding a debate. How have the righteous fallen and the faithful perished from among the children of men. We need to weep as we read these stirring tales of yesteryear from the pens of those who were so on fire for the unity of God's people that they allowed nothing to stand in the way.

In this current series which I am doing on fellowship, the *koinonia* **of the disciples of our Lord, it is appropriate and important that we consider the related term** *koinonos*, **which designates the sharer or partaker. As William Barclay points out in "A New Testament Wordbook" this term in classical Greek means a companion, a partner, or a joint-owner. In secular usage it was a business term. In Luke 5:10 we are told that James and John were** *partners* **with Simon in a fishing enterprise. In the same sense Paul informed those who asked about the status of Titus that he was his** *partner* **(2 Cor. 8:23). When asking Philemon to receive back his runaway slave as a brother, the apostle says, "If you consider me a** *partner*, **receive him as myself" (verse 17). In the New Testament, therefore, the word is used of partnership in either secular or spiritual pursuits.**

The Galilean fishermen who became ambassadors for the Christ would not need an explanation of what it meant to be a *koinonos* **in the Lord. They understood its implication from the partnership of the fishing nets. They had been joined together by a common objective, they had mutually toiled and endured**

hardship, and had shared in prosperity and adversity, depending upon the size of the catch and the vagaries of the market.

When Paul seeks to enforce the point that those who eat the bread and drink the cup together are in fellowship, he cites an example. "Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices *partakers* of the altar?" (1 Cor. 10:18). A certain portion of some sacrifices was to be eaten by those qualified under the law. Those who thus ate were partners or sharers in the benefits and blessings derived from attendance upon the whole service centered about the altar. Paul extends his reasoning to show that one cannot be in partnership with the Lord and with demons at the same time (see verse 21). There is nothing in common between God and idols. One exists in the mind of the worshiper. The other exists independently. So there can be nothing in common between ourselves and both at the same time. "You cannot be partakers of the Lord's table and the table of demons."

We share with each other in Christ because He has shared His bounty and grace with us. We are not in the fellowship because of our attainments in wealth, power, prestige, wisdom or knowledge. They do not necessarily debar from fellowship, and neither do they enhance it. The mere fact that one may be worth a huge amount while another is in poverty will not affect their fellowship in Christ. It is not based upon that. The fact that one may be in a political office and the other a virtual unknown will not affect our fellowship in Christ. He received us both regardless of circumstances and brought us into the glorious fellowship. We were made partners, not through anything we did, or because of any accomplishment of our own, but because of the riches of His grace.

We are not in the fellowship because we understand everything alike, or because we have reached a certain stage of spiritual development. We did not come into the fellowship by

making an "A" on a test on doctrinal matters, or by passing a test. The fact is that we are in all sorts of developmental stages from lisping babes to mature men. Even those who are mature have much yet to learn. The fact is that we will never pass beyond the disciple stage in this life. "The brotherhood" we are told to love (1 Peter 2:17) does not consist merely of those who agree with us upon some controversial point such as Bible classes, colleges, individual cups, the pastor system, contribution baskets, long hair, or a manner of breaking the bread. There are those who would like to limit it to those who wear ties, have their hair cropped and have no beard. But they are schismatic and factional in their outlook. They suffer from restricted vision and spiritual astigmatism. "The brotherhood" of Christ stems from the fatherhood of God. Jesus is not ashamed to call us brethren because we have the same Father as himself. He said "Go to *my brethren*, **and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father" (John 20:17).**

Every person on this earth who is a child of God is my brother. He is in "the brotherhood." When we talk of the brotherhood in such a manner as to exclude any of God's children we are sectarian. We are also ignorant. We reflect not upon the children but upon the Father when we deny their paternity. In an attempt to defend our own views we actually exclude God. Such a partisan usage of the term is quite frequent. It is promoted by factional leaders and editors. I regularly receive a number of journals and reports of those preachers who contribute news to them. All speak of work "in the brotherhood" but they do not speak as the Bible does. They do not mean the same thing by the term that the word means.

To one the brotherhood is limited to those who oppose classes, to another those who use fermented wine in the Lord's Supper, to another those who break the bread in a certain fashion, to another those who oppose orphan homes, to another those who object to individual cups, to another those who employ instrumental music, to another those who oppose its use.

It is a rather strange phenomenon that all of these various factions have a paper, and generally the editor and certain chosen cohorts in his favor, constitute the ruling hierarchy of each "brotherhood." Regardless of how you stand in the grace of God, if you do not continue in the good graces of the editor, you will be ruined and hounded out of the brotherhood. You must "walk the chalk line" and bow to the whim of the editor, or you will be "drummed out of the corps." Nothing is more certain than your falling into disgrace if you dare to oppose the pet project of "the powers that be." Why men will allow themselves to become so enslaved that they dare not think for themselves constitutes the anomaly of the ages.

Pressures are exerted to keep people "in line" and brain-washing methods are employed to stifle individual thinking and to confine men behind the "paper curtain." It has long been a question with me as to whether the schismatic spirit produces a faction which then creates an editorial mouthpiece, or whether an editor creates a faction "in his own likeness, and in his own image." But there is no denying that the sectarian spirit is so rife, and there are so many "brotherhoods" in existence, that the one thing which is unique in these days is a wholly unsectarian plea, and when brethren hear it they say like the ancient Athenians, "May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is? For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears" (Acts 17:19, 20).

It seems incredible that angels and archangels waited with such wonderment the birth of a little chiefly American party to save the church from the frightful error of teaching the word in Sunday Schools. Or, that John the Baptist came in the spirit and power of Elijah to announce the advent of a kingdom whose great objective was the preservation of the world from the awesome tragedy of singing praises to God accompanied by an instrument. Even more astounding is it that Jesus, heralded by all of the prophets, introduced by a chorus of angels, and proclaimed throughout the world to every tribe, tongue and

language, ended up reigning over a little problem filled group.

I am thrilled that I have been delivered from the "Mickey Mouse" mentality which kept me from being a *koinonos* with precious souls who love my Lord so much and seek to obey him to the full extent of their understanding. For years I thought the kingdom of heaven was an institution. I did not know it was a reign or rule and that everyone who enlisted under that sovereignty was a citizen. At that time it was composed mainly of those who lived in one section of our own country. There were few books and little knowledge. We were mainly ignorant in spite of our sincerity. We were hostile toward others, very suspicious, and always combative. But when Jesus struck the scales from my eyes, and removed the fetters from my heart, the kingdom expanded and the family grew larger.

Any group which forces you to believe something other than the great fact that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, as a condition of admission to their fellowship, has laid another foundation than that which has been laid, which is Jesus Christ. And that "something else" is the creed of that group, and the group constitutes a sect in the fair import of the term. And any group which establishes admission to brotherhood upon any other basis than the new birth is doing despite to the Spirit of grace, and opposing God's plan for the ages.

We are participants with God because we share in the divine nature. The very word *koinonos* is used in this connection. "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be *partakers* of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Peter 1:4). Being partners in the divine nature brings us into intimate relationship with all who share in that nature. It effectively frees us from all the demands of the carnal human nature. We are no longer debtors to the flesh to live after the flesh. Sin has no dominion over us.

It also obligates us to use our faith as a foundation and upon it to build a life structure using as materials the "excellencies" which are enumerated. The new life is not static, stunted or stifled. We are to grow and glow. This indicates that when we are called to glory and virtue we are far from being spiritually perfect or intellectually mature. We are one in Him, not because of personal attainment but because of His grace.

Due to differences in early training, environment, and temperament, as well as variations in aptitudes, skills, and opportunities of study, there will be many things upon which we will disagree. These differences can be resolved if they need to be. There are some matters on which we may always differ, but they are of such little consequence as to warrant no particular effect upon us; there are others of a graver nature, but upon these we should bestow more abundant study and consultation. The whole problem is one of attitudes— toward God, His word, and each other. A recognition of kindred ties in Jesus will enable us to treat each other as brethren while we draw closer to Him and each other in our efforts.

Thoughts on Fellowship (9)

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This is the final article in a series on the above topic. In all of these we have humbly set forth our convictions without regard to our past ideas and conclusions. We have not sought to bind them upon others. We respect and love those who disagree with the thoughts suggested. It is not at all necessary to concur with our statements to be received in the Lord, or to be loved and respected as our brother in Him. We trust that our readers have been stimulated to think, reason and discuss relative to the important problem that confronts us. Our views may not be so important but none of us doubt that fellowship in Jesus is very important. We begin herewith a summary of our views.

1. Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ are divided and torn into warring sects, and these defeat the purpose of our absent King. But they are still believers. They have heard the good news proclaimed and have sought to reply to its demands upon their lives. Regardless of how far apart they may seem to be they differ as believers and not as unbelievers. It is this which makes the whole thing so tragic. They have been splintered by following the ideas which have crystallized in the minds of men. Not one of the divisive things has been created by God. It is not belief of the gospel which is the problem but the something else in each case.

2. His will is that all who believe in Him should be one, and for this He prayed on the night before His death. The thing of paramount importance to Jesus as He faced Gethsemane and Golgotha was the unity of all who accepted Him as the Messiah

and God's Son. With the shadow of the cross falling across His pathway He prayed that all who believe in Him through the apostolic testimony should be one. He prayed that this oneness might be of the quality that existed between Himself and the Father. He wanted us to be one in them and wanted it to be a visible unity which the world could see. For he realized that the world could not be won to believe in Him until those in the world who believed in Him would be one. It may seem strange that God would condition the salvation of the world upon such a fragile thread but He did so. We pay the price of a lost world for our divisions.

In some indefinable way our unity is connected with the glory which Jesus dispenses and which Jesus had with the Father before the world began. He declares, "I gave them the same glory you gave me, so that they may be one, just as you and I are one. I in them and you in me, so that they may be completely one, in order that the world may know that you sent me and that you love them as you love me." That may yet be a mystery unto our human minds but the design of it is clear. Our disunity reflects against the glory of God and keeps Him from being magnified.

Just as the Shekinah, representing God's glory in the days of Israel and going before them as a pillar of cloud and fire, brought them together around the holy tent, so the glory of Christ draws us like a magnet to a common center and unites us in the greatest force on earth. The farther we get from the glory of God the more divided we come. The closer we come to it the closer we come to each other. It leads us in our pilgrimage and tells us where to camp.

3. Religious division and sectarian strife is not the normal condition of the body of Christ. Like cancer in a physical body it is a malignant growth and an abnormal state. If medical researchists ever accept cancer as a normal condition they will cease to dedicate themselves to research dealing with its cause

and cure, and we will be doomed. Likewise, if we accept sectarianism as the normal state, declare there is nothing to be done about it and cease to labor to determine its cause and cure, we will be doomed to incessant warfare amongst believers, and none of us can be wholly guiltless.

It seems to me that we are in that state now. We have accepted division and agreed to live with it as long as we can, just like a man with an inoperable malignancy. No one becomes greatly exercised about it. No one is worked up over it. Each party is so busy proselyting and trying to grow larger and fatter that it accepts with nonchalance the cancer eating away at its inward being. There are no researchists carefully examining what has brought us to this sad state. We have resolved to go on, each in his own way, without reference to other believers.

Sickness is not normal for the human body. It is the result of sin, either directly or indirectly. Had man continued obediently before God there would have been no disease to plague him, no pain or discomfort. Likewise our sad state in the kingdom of glory is a distortion of the design of the Creator of the body of Christ, It is a hideous growth upon its fair face, making it the subject of odious comparisons by the world which beholds it. We need to see it as it is, revolting, disgusting, and an abomination unto God. We can never be complacent about it. We can never endure it

4. Moved by a fervent desire to help answer the prayer of our benign and blessed Lord, we have sought to investigate the subject of fellowship anew, and we have set forth our own findings in this series of articles. What we have suggested may help only if we do not accept these conclusions as final, but use them as foundations for future exploration and study. Not one of us has the last word to say on the subject of our disunity. It is so mixed and mingled with the temperaments of those involved, so deeply ingrained in their personalities, that it can never be solved by any one person.

I am not so naive as to suppose that everyone will take what I say and seek to implement it. I have become a controversial figure. Many will not read what I write because of their personal feeling toward me. It is impossible to take the position of neutrality on all of our issues as I have without incurring the displeasure of numerous ones who think those issues are all important. I have written with the view that others may stumble across what I have written after I am gone and find that it makes sense. They will not be motivated by prejudice or hatred toward me.

The walls will not be broken down in a day as were those of Jericho for we cannot perform miracles with ram's horn trumpets. But if we can carefully hack away at the structures created by men to keep us apart it may be that we can weaken them until in the after years they will be reduced to rubble and the people of God be restored to one another. If it is in His will that they be removed no one can forever stand against them. It is in this firm conviction we have written in love and without rancor.

5. The question of sectarian strife is a major one with many roots. There is no simple answer or solution. Casual and careless thinkers frequently demonstrate their immaturity by professing to have a glib answer for every problem. It is possible that over-simplification is one of the chief faults in our reasoning. Certainly, it generally ignores the thinking of the other person and his reason for so thinking.

The greatest fallacy of the latter part of the twentieth century is the either/or fallacy. It is appealing because of its ease of application, but it is just as wrong as if it were hard. It ignores the gray areas and brushes away the fog, without seeing what is involved. Our divisions were mostly inherited. They are sanctified by our fathers, now dead and sleeping in the cemeteries. It appears to us that to be true to them we must maintain the status quo. I challenge this. Our fathers were

mistaken about many things. Mine was and so was yours. The best way to be true to their memory is by being honest with ourselves and with our God. It will avail nothing to hide truth in order to honor traditions. No skeleton hand reaching out of the grave can point the way for me to walk. New occasions teach new duties!

6. We have suggested that the issue of fellowship is confused because we now use the term in a sense in which it was never employed by the Holy Spirit. It is frequently equated with endorsement of another's position. But fellowship is a state or condition into which we are called by God through the gospel. Our entrance into that relationship which is described as being "in Christ" is contingent upon the belief of one fact, and obedience to one act. That one fact is that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. The one act is immersion of such a penitent believer in water. This act inducts one into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Such an one is added to the body of Christ.

We do not fellowship things, but persons. The word "fellow" demonstrates this. It is sheer ignorance to ask if one fellowships instrumental music, and folly to ask if he fellowships cups, classes, or colleges. The question is whether or not he is called into the fellowship of those who share the opinion that such things are right or wrong. He is really called into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ, and in that fellowship he can hold an opinion contrary to the general norm about all of the above and a hundred other things and this does not affect his standing with Jesus. The great question is "What think ye of Jesus, whose Son is he?" You can be right about Jesus and wrong about a dozen other things and still be saved, but if you are wrong about Jesus you can be right about everything else and still be lost. Is Jesus Lord of your life? That is the real issue.

7. Unfortunately, and in opposition to the will of the Father of all light, those who believe in our precious Lord are divided

and scattered over the hills of sectarianism. They are kept apart, segregated and separated by human creeds, interpretations, and opinions, which have been made tests of fellowship. To alleviate the abnormal condition we must eliminate these factors. We should guard against any future division among believers by resolving never to make anything a test of fellowship which God has not made a condition of salvation. This one principle accepted and adopted now, will guarantee that no other cleavage will ever occur among earnest believers in the Savior.

8. The problem of offsetting divisions already in existence, some of which are of long standing, will not be so easy. The peacemakers will be called compromisers. Those who plead for unity of all believers, and are devoid of the party spirit, must be prepared to endure misrepresentation, abuse, and false accusation. They must steel themselves against retaliation when their motives are judged as evil. They must never allow themselves to cease to love and pray for those who try to undermine and overthrow them. But the healing of schisms and repairing of breaches is so important to the work of God that it must be dearer than wealth, prestige or even life itself. A restoration must be preceded by a reformation— a change in attitude. The work can only go forward in love, an all pervading love which knows no limit so far as humankind is concerned.

There can be no recovery of the lost ground of fellowship without association. This means association with those whom we once regarded as unfaithful. And this means making oneself vulnerable. It means going among others and openly sharing with them, doing as Paul did at Corinth, commending what you can and refusing to commend what you cannot. It does not mean arguing or debating with them. Sometimes it means deferring judgment. At other times it means withholding it until a later time. "The rest will I set in order when I come." But the repair of every rupture begins with the resumption of associations, whether it be in the domestic, political or religious world. Men must sit down and talk, and to do that they must meet. The

peace-makers are the ones to initiate such talks. Gradually, the party spirit will erode away as each gains confidence in the good intentions of the other.

9. There must be a willingness to examine past acts which have resulted in division, and a readiness to admit mistakes. There must be a heart yearning for oneness, a fervent desire to see the will of God done on earth as it is in heaven. Division did not come over night. Unity will not be achieved in a day. Patience and forbearance are prime requisites. We must be willing to plant the seed: the increase will be given by God.

Much of our problem has been augmented by our exclusiveness through the years. Division generally began with a small matter but it has gathered accretions through the years because of ignoring it. It is like a wrecked vessel on the bottom of the ocean. When a salvage crew dives down to bring up treasure, the thing rescued from the briny depths may have all kinds of accumulation clinging to it. There must be care not to neglect something that is really precious. Our task is to get together and scrape away a lot of rust. We may find ourselves much closer to each other than we suspected.

10. If it be true that all who have accepted Jesus as God's Son, and have been immersed by His authority, are children of God, and by this fact constitute a brotherhood, we can regard each other as brethren while we discuss our differences in humility and seek a solution to our problems. We lose nothing by being kind, considerate and courteous to those who disagree with us. A recognition of brotherhood is not evil. But we must want unity. We must wage peace as others wage war. And this means the development of a strategy for peace, and its proper implementation. Many have no such strategy at all despite the fact that it is one of the most important things in the midst of a divided world.

Those who prefer to maintain the status quo will never

answer the prayer of Jesus. They stand athwart His path and hinder the accomplishment of the divine purpose. We must be discontent to perpetuate human parties with human names and human aims. These but pamper our pride. We must sigh and cry for something better than what we have. We must pray for unity and toil to achieve it. We must agonize in prayer, and bombard the ramparts of heaven night and day with our petitions.

Above all, we must love every soul for whom Jesus died. The love of God must be shed abroad in our hearts. It must be the motivating principle of our lives. Then, regardless of what men may do to us, we will triumph over hate and envy. We will serve those who would destroy us, help those who would ruin us, and do good unto all men. Love never fails. It never quits either. If we stand upon love, we will stand forever. Nothing can shake us. And this will work as leaven, for it is the leaven of God. It is our only hope of survival. It is the key to future happiness and security. There is no other alternative. We must love all men or perish! We must find the way to oneness, or miss the way to heaven.

One thing essential to offsetting division is fairness and justice. The mind of an editor must not become our criterion of scripturality. The voice of dissent must be heard. We are not like Russia where men are sent to Siberia for voicing something different than the party line. Let those who disagree be allowed to speak up. Truth has nothing to fear by presenting both sides of an issue so that honest and qualified readers may study them side by side. Through equity and kindness we may be able to heal schisms of long standing. Every tendency toward unity of the Spirit should bring rejoicing. Love is the golden key to unlock for us the store-house of God's grace. Let us make use of that key!

If Christ were to come back and walk the streets of any of our great cities today, the heart that bled for the sin of mankind, would bleed afresh because of the condition existing among

those who believe that He is the Son of God. He would behold the party spirit parading under the guise of faithfulness, see hate wearing the livery of love, and selfishness enshrined as sacrifice. In the name of Christianity, he would hear men bear false witness against brethren, and behold the malignant spirit stab character and defame reputation. He would see church buildings rising as temples of pride, and visualize the haughty spirit of the Pharisee in modern dress as men still pray in effect: "Lord, I thank you that I am not as other men are."

Sectarian division is our modern scandal. It has raped the church and pillaged God's sanctuary. And because all of us are a part of the Christian realm we are shamed and debased by what has transpired. Because I am a human being I cannot be unaffected by man's inhumanity to man. The tortures and barbarity of Dachau and Buchenwald must rise up to torment my dreams, for all humanity suffered in the gas chambers of those German prisons. The stiff fingers of those who died in the Holocaust point straight at the heart of every person on earth. In the same way, every division that has ever occurred in the Christian world, every rent in the fabric of brotherhood, cannot leave me untouched, even though I do not consciously acknowledge it, and though I seek to disavow it.

Every new schism that appears, every sect that is spawned, every faction that is created must affect me, whether remotely or otherwise, for it makes the task of arriving at unity a greater one, it postpones by so much the answer to the prayer of the blessed Lord, it increases the pressure of endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. I cannot be unmoved or untouched by religious dissension anywhere on earth, for, being a follower of the Nazarene, I am partaker in the momentous effort which cost his life. When a little congregation in a far away place, kindled by jealousy and inflamed by passion, erupts, until those who walked together now walk apart in their partisan spirit of self-righteousness, this pebble flung into the pool of Christianity, creates ripples which will not only break

against the shores of my heart, but will not spend themselves until they foam out their mire upon the beaches of eternity.

No one of us can be utterly free from a sense of shame while bigotry, intolerance and factionism exist in the name of religion. We are Christian, and the rents and tears in the Christian fabric reflect against us all, as surely as injustice, inequality and cruelty to human beings in any part of the earth reflect against us as human beings. We cannot disavow our responsibility by arrogantly enquiring if we are keepers of our brethren. We cannot, like Pilate, wash our hands, and be free of the fatal guilt of the mangled body of Jesus, so long as we have made no attempt to pour in ointment and balm and bind up the wounds.

I am impelled by a sense of urgency, because I believe that our civilization staggers today on the brink of a precipice. I think we are doing a crazed and drunken dance on a narrow ledge above the valley of destruction. Unless we can make the Christian concept work, our children, or our children's children, may become mere statistics in an atomic holocaust, their burned, scared and charred bodies mingled with hot steel and choking rubble. Time is running out. The sun is setting. Day is ending. Gog and Magog are gathering for the fray. There is but one thing that can save our world from disintegration. Jesus said that his disciples were the salt of the earth. If that salt loses its strength the earth cannot be preserved. There is no other alternative. We must restore the saving quality of the salt, or we shall all perish.

It is this which prompted me to begin to plead that we increase our labor in love to heal the breaches in the walls of Zion, that we wage peace as diligently as others wage war. Only the peacemakers will be called the children of God. Happy are the peacemakers, says the prince of peace. We must find the way to unity or our boasted glory will lead to the grave. We must recapture the sense of spiritual kinship with all sincere believers

in the Messiah. We dare not compromise truth. We dare not forsake principles. But we must find the solution to the problem of division. We cannot fracture ourselves into strength, nor split ourselves into the unity of the Spirit.

Unity will not come by accident. We will not simply stumble into it. We cannot ignore the causes of disunity and restore it. But time is of the essence. The shadows are lengthening. The storm clouds gather. The winds of destiny are moaning and rising. Brethren, do not tarry much longer or it will be too late. "Now is the accepted time, today is the day of salvation."

PILGRIMAGE OF JOY

by W. Carl Ketcherside

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PILGRIMAGE OF JOY

An Autobiography of Carl Ketcherside

with Introduction by Leroy Garrett

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Introduction by Leroy Garrett

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W. Carl Ketcherside was at last persuaded to put into serial form the story of his life, which he chose to call "A Pilgrimage of Joy." The title itself speaks well to the life of this unusual man, for his earthly sojourn was indeed that of a pilgrim, which to him meant that his life was a plan of God and that his destiny was to fulfill the purpose God had for him in this world. He was a man who was "on his way" to something higher. He was a sojourner in a world that was not his home, but as he passed this way he was joyfully involved in making his own contribution to what he called "this interesting world."

His life was a pilgrimage of joy largely because he made it so by his winsome sense of humor, his contagious enthusiasm, and his undying optimism. If these ingredients— humor, enthusiasm, optimism— do not always make for a joyful pilgrimage in this world, they certainly did in the life of Carl Ketcherside. He was an "up" person who never saw a "down" day. He was a delight to be around, and he had a knack for making people feel good about themselves when in his presence.

Before he brought his monthly journal, *Mission Messenger*, **to a close in December, 1975, after 37 years of publication, we agreed that he would begin immediately to write regularly for my publication,** *Restoration Review*. **He announced to his readers that while his paper would no longer be published, they could keep in touch with him through my paper. Many of his readers who were not already taking** *Restoration Review* **became**

subscribers. From 1976 until his death in 1989 he wrote regularly for my paper, his last articles being published posthumously. I think some of his best writing was done in these years in the pages of *Restoration Review*, perhaps because he was free of the ordeal of having to edit his own paper. And in my paper he knew he was free to say whatever was in his heart and mind, with no strings attached.

I urged him to begin writing his autobiography in serial form on a monthly basis, and to continue as long as seemed appropriate. He wrote for four years (40 installments), supposing that would be sufficient. I encouraged him to continue until he finally wrote for six years, concluding his 60th installment, "Last Time Around," in December, 1981, which chronologically brought his life story up to the time he closed down *Mission Messenger*. If the series appears a bit disconnected in places, which it may, it should be remembered that it was first published in serial form and without defined parameters.

What is important is that Carl has told his own story in his own way. He was encouraged to make it a kind of intellectual autobiography, reflective of the changes in his thinking through the years. The reader will see that he does share the drama of some of the changes that turned his life in a different direction, from that of a "wing commander" of a narrow sect, a term he frequently used to describe his old life as a sectarian, to that of an envoy of peace, unity, and fellowship through forbearing love. This is especially evident when he describes his own life as a polemicist and how he changed his mind about debating his own brothers in Christ, and when he tells how, after 25 years in the ministry and baptizing thousands, he at last on a wintry night in a little chapel in Belfast, Ireland invited Jesus into his heart, renouncing forever his sectarianism.

It was understood that Carl eventually would write a prologue to his autobiography, bringing the events of his life, along with some of his most recent thinking, up to date. But he

never got around to writing that final word to his "Pilgrimage of Joy," which would have been reflections on his life during those last years. It turned out to be more than 14 years from the time he ended his narrative with the demise of his journal to the time of his death.

One purpose of this introduction, therefore, is to fill that 14-year gap with a summary of what he did during those years and in what ways his ministry developed. It will of course have to be brief, for Carl's life, along with his wife Nell's, was as busy as ever once he closed down their journal. As Carl put it, he was as busy as ever but the pace was different. He continued to write extensively for several journals. Within a month of closing down his own paper he had several essays for *Mission*, *Integrity*, and *Christian Standard*, as well as for *Restoration Review*. He was especially pleased to do a series on the American Bicentennial for the *Standard*.

Up until the last few years of his life he had travelled and lectured among the colleges and churches as much as ever, and he made several significant journeys abroad. But the most important change in his life in the post-Mission Messenger years was the founding of Cornerstone in 1983, an inner-city mission in St. Louis, which appears to have captured his heart and mind more than any task he had ever set his hand to. It soon dominated his and Nell's life, and they would have it no other way. If Carl's view of ministry changed in those last years, I think it would be that he came to see a greater need for work among the poor and needy than among the established churches. He turned down invitations to hold seminars and give lectures in order to join Nell and others in passing out blankets, food, and clothing at the Cornerstone. He taught as many classes, but now it was mostly in the inner city and at Oak Hill Chapel, his home congregation.

He may have become sort of "burned out" on visiting so many churches for so many years. In the innards of his beloved

St. Louis he was among the rank and file, and that is what he preferred. But he was no less active. He was always revving it up, always on the go, always doing something, up to the day he died. In those last days, when he was giving so much of himself, a friend who was concerned about his apparent fatigue threatened to call his doctor. "You leave that doctor alone," he insisted, as he proceeded to the Cornerstone. He died the way he would have preferred, with his boots on, with his heart on the present and his eye on the future. After one more busy day, he committed his soul to God's safekeeping, got in bed, went to sleep and woke up in heaven. A neat way to do it if one can manage it!

If there is a diary on that last decade and a half of his life it would be in the many letters he wrote to people all over the world. He was an inveterate letter writer, many of the letters being written in longhand, which reflected his gifted penmanship, which won him prizes in his youth. His handwriting did not change with the years. His hand was as steady and eloquent at 81 as it was 37 years earlier when we first began to correspond. Many people have mentioned to me through the years two things that impressed them about corresponding with Carl: that he would bother to write to *them*, and that he had such a beautiful hand. He delighted in writing love notes, especially to those who were critical of him, and it was common for him to write words of commendation to the author of an article or a book he had read.

We corresponded regularly for almost four decades. Realizing that his letters would one day have historic value, I carefully preserved them, hundreds of them. Carl's letters are a mirror of the real person that he was, occasionally prideful but always showing his strength. Here are a few lines from some of them, all taken from the last 14 years of his life:

Anticipating what he might write in his autobiography about his association with the Daniel Sommer family, who

played a significant role in our history, he wrote in 1976:

> **I suspect that in dealing with the Sommer family I shall let loose some news not previously known. It is certain that I will show the influence of editors in perpetuating division.**

Reuel Lemmons, longtime editor of the *Firm Foundation*, was often critical of Carl's more open views of unity and fellowship. He editorialized Carl as "Blind in One Eye" and would not allow him space to reply. They pilloried each other in their papers. But Carl was never vindictive nor did he hold grudges, as this note early in 1989 would indicate:

> **I am saddened by the passing of Reuel. Now our disagreements of the past seem as a dead leaf blown by the wind. I am especially sorry for his good wife who has been a chronic invalid for years. I earnestly pray that the brethren will help and sustain her.**

Sometimes he was philosophical, as in this note on the occasion of the release of the hostages in Iran on the eve of President Reagan's inauguration:

> **To be free, as the hostages said, is the greatest blessing in the world, and I am sure that the hostages to systems feel the same way. What a great thing God is doing for us in these days!**

And he was sometimes introspective, as in this reflection in 1981:

> **It is kind of frightening to think that all of us are leaving our imprint upon the record. It should make all of us a little more careful when we realize that years after we slumber in the earth men will borrow what we have said and use it to His eternal glory or to His detriment. It makes us all feel much more humble as we are called upon to touch the sordid lives into which people have become trapped and snared and to which they are held hostage.**

This paragraph on part of his itinerary for 1980 is typical of the three attributes already referred to: his humor, enthusiasm, and optimism:

> **I leave for Palisade, Colorado next Wednesday and will be in all kinds of gatherings there. It is a great opportunity to really go all out in the work in that section. Then the next week I am going to Portland, Oregon for a couple of meetings. It is evident on almost every side that God is at work through His Spirit bringing about better days. I am thrilled with what I am looking at all over America and Canada. Would Alexander Campbell have loved these days!**

If Carl was an inveterate correspondent, he was also a consummate reader. He was usually reading several books at one time, as indicated in this 1981 paragraph:

> **I am currently reading three books. This is a regular practice of mine. Two of them are "Karl Marx: A Christian Assessment of His Life and Thought" and "C. S. Lewis: Mere Christianity." I find both of them highly fascinating. The erudition of the latter is extremely impressive. The third book seems also to be vastly interesting since it contains a kind of panoramic survey of a land in which I grew up. The book is "Pioneer Women: Voices from the Kansas Frontier" by Joanna L. Stratton. The introduction is by Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. It is fascinating. It gives you a new impression of the strength and courage of women. Not that I needed that, because I have always believed in it.**

Concerning a stay in the hospital he wrote in 1986:

> **I spent a week in the hospital with a surgery for prostatitis. But I refused to be kept in bed too long, and through his marvelous grace led my roommate back to Jesus and visited all 21 rooms in Section 1100. I met all kinds of people from all over and we had some thrilling talks about Jesus. You can talk to people in the hospital**

easier than anywhere else. We are having a great time as we grow older.

He had a way with words, even in his letters. This comment on the Flew-Warren debate, which was held in my home town and billed as "the debate of the century," is vintage Carl Ketcherside:

> **Your article on the debate was terrific. That was a first-class fiasco and a goldbrick if ever there was one. I think those who promoted it thought that it would place "the Lord's Church" in the forefront of defence of truth in the evangelical scholastic world and most of them did not even know the debate of the century was being held. It was like inviting the whole world to a gigantic fireworks explosion and then having the firecrackers fizzle and the Roman candles backfire. No wonder people are confused. What with one affirming there is a God and acting as if there was, it is enough to blow your mind and put you in orbit. What with one affirming there is a God and acting as if there were none, while the other denying there is a God and acting as if there were, it is enough to blow your mind and put you in orbit.**

In those latter years he was always reporting on his ministry at Cornerstone, which became his first love:

> **Nell and I (well, myself at least) are having a "ball" at the Cornerstone. I'm getting ready to teach a Bible Study on Monday mornings. We were there yesterday and helped some of the most sorrowful looking people I have ever seen. Worst are the abused wives. I had experience in a drunken husband stabbing his wife and the children were back home the next day. It goes on continuously! We gave away more Bibles last week than at any time since we turned the place from selling spirits to giving away the Spirit. The river of life is flowing as He said that it would.**

He was always writing about Nell. Not only did he tell her every day how much he loved her, but he often told Ouida and

me how much he loved her. We were kept posted on her several serious illnesses through the years, and rejoiced that in 1988 she appeared much improved. Then in August of that year she went home to be with the Lord. A few days later Carl wrote to us about the end:

> **Nell left us very suddenly. She died almost immediately of a massive heart attack. I arose and opened the bathroom door, not having heard a sound from her. She was lying doubled up with her head between the stool and the tub. I tried to get her to say something but she was gone. She detested formality so much that at her large funeral services at two places— here and at Flat River, I spoke briefly to the crowd, introduced Sue (Mrs. Sue Burton, their daughter) who read the poem enclosed, the four grandchildren sang her favorite song. I asked for those who wanted to pay tribute to her to raise their hands and speak, and we followed with a few words from a brother. I went back to work teaching the next morning. It was hard.**

Yes, it was hard. After 60 years of having Nell at his side it was a bit too much for Carl to go it alone. He himself now had less than a year to live. In a letter postmarked the day he died, May 24, 1989, which is probably the last letter he ever wrote, he summarized the agony of the lonely months that had passed: "I am disappointed in myself. I thought that I had the power to overcome grief or anything else which was my lot. I found that I simply do not have." In the same letter he wrote of his engagement to Fran Woodside, a widow in his home church, a former Roman Catholic whom he had baptized into Christ. She had been a friend to both Carl and Nell for several years.

He explained his need to marry to the folk at Oak Hill Chapel: "The loneliness finally got to me. I asked Fran to marry." He said he did not want to live with his children nor in a nursing home. He and Fran would take care of each other and serve God together. They even planned a Hawaiian honeymoon.

But it was not to be, for the end came for Carl several months before the proposed marriage. But again this is vintage Carl Ketcherside, who even at 81 was living on the growing edge, excited by the present and awed by the future.

At our last visit together in Hartford, Illinois, only a few weeks before his death, he was pleased that I was not among those who were critical of his plans to marry. He knew that I understood that a man can be devoted to a woman for 60 years, and then, once she is gone, marry another without in anyway reflecting upon the first marriage. On that occasion he extolled the virtues of his late wife and reconfirmed his love and appreciation for her, and then said as he gestured helplessly, "But she isn't here anymore." It was a touching testimony to the beauty and importance of marital companionship. Since Carl's death I have kept in touch with Fran and find her to be a brave woman who has frequently been smitten by life's vicissitudes, one who has learned to yield to the power of God's healing.

The most significant single event in Carl's life during those last years was his attendance in 1983 at the International Convention of Itinerant Evangelists in Amsterdam, Holland. His enthusiasm for this conference is indicative of the changes that God had wrought in his life through the years, and is reflective of the contribution he was able to make to his own people. If the experience back in 1951 in the little church in Belfast had liberated him from sectarianism, the world evangelism conference in Amsterdam in 1983 confirmed his commitment to the church catholic. It was a rare ecumenical experience for a man who had been years preparing himself to appreciate it. In four installments in the 1984 *Restoration Review* **he tells about the conference and what it meant to him. His evaluation is a commentary on his own pilgrimage of one blighted by the factional spirit to one enlightened by an ecumenical outlook. It is his own testimonial that it is only the love of Christ that can break down partisan walls and make believers one in heart and soul.**

There were evangelists present from 174 countries, representing virtually every Christian community in the world. Many from the Third World were so poor, being ministers who supported themselves by some trade, that they were provided a change of clothing during the convention. Carl tells of talking with evangelists, sometimes by translation, from Namibia, Zambia, South Africa, India, Sri Lanka, and several South American countries, to name a few, and he was in seminars with some of the great evangelists of the world. He listened to men who were experienced in witnessing for Christ to Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, atheists and communists. He heard Michael Green of Oxford, an Anglican, at one session and the Metropolitan of the Russian Orthodox Church at another. He sat with Baptists from Yugoslavia and with ministers from the Armenian Orthodox Church.

For ten days he was with leaders from denominations that he had not even heard of before. It was at a gathering of the church universal, the first of its kind in history, and he was impressed that it had but a single theme, Jesus Christ and him crucified. They were there to encourage each other and to learn better how to witness for Jesus Christ in today's world. Carl was an enthusiastic participant, describing it as "a mind-blowing experience." The great truth that he had shared with so many for so long proved true for him in Amsterdam in a special way, that "Wherever God has a child I have a brother or sister."

He tells how one morning as he was walking to one of the sessions he was approached by two men on the street, Arabs, who were curious about the conference, and, seeing Carl's identification badge, asked him what it was about. Carl missed the session so as to spend an hour with the men. He told them that the meetings were not about a *what* but about a *who*. He told them that Jesus Christ was the only answer for our ripped-off world. What Carl told those Arabs is a fitting description of what had happened in his own life, and it points up the message that he gave to his own generation. He moved from all the

"whats" of sectarian opinionizing to the "Who" of the Christian gospel. When we first met he was majoring in the "whats." When he died he had given the best half of his life in majoring in the "Who." And what a difference that made, not only in his own life, but in the multitudes that his ministry touched!

Home from Amsterdam, he was asked by his critics what such a conference could possibly accomplish. His answer, as I see it, is a suitable commentary on the significance of the life and ministry of Carl Ketcherside:

> **I think we must face the fact that, like the generation contemporary with Jesus, many of us are blind and cannot see afar off. Long life and continuous drudgery in one of the more legalistic sects of this day have blurred our vision and dimmed our sight until "we see men like trees walking." We need "the second touch." Surgery for the spiritual cataracts which cause a milky film across our minds would help. Because of my past orientation I also went with no little skepticism. It was all blown away after my arrival.**

In Amsterdam he saw demonstrated on a large scale the liberating truth that had long undergirded his plea for unity, that we can love and accept people, and enjoy the fellowship of the Spirit with them, without approving of everything they believe or practice. At that great conference he found confirmation for what he had long taught others, that we are to make nothing a test of fellowship that God has not made a condition for going to heaven. The only unity that is ever possible is unity in diversity.

Carl Ketcherside admitted that his vision was once blurred by sectarian bias. He once saw men like trees walking. But he received the second touch from the One who kept on changing his life and clearing his vision. And that second touch led him on his pilgrimage of joy.

— Leroy Garrett

1. Early Years

In the Beginning

Contents

I was born early in the morning of May 10, 1908, in a little two-room miner's cabin in a poverty-stricken village called Cantwell, nestled in the eastern foothills of the Missouri Ozarks. My advent was at a very inauspicious time during the presidential tenure of Theodore Roosevelt, for I made my debut on the heels of the great financial panic of 1907, a matter to which I gave little thought at the time. My father was William Ketcherside and he had married Anna Marguerite Hansen some eighteen months before I entered the scene as "a howling success." There were five other children to follow to compose a family circle of three boys and three girls. All of us are still alive as I write these words.

All of the Ketchersides (or Ketchersids, for some dropped the final "e" about the year 1800) are descended from one progenitor, Thomas Ketcherside, who came over from Scotland shortly before the time of the American Revolution. His family settled in Virginia and North Carolina. Our branch of the clan emigrated to Missouri after it became United States territory as part of the Louisiana Purchase, and took up land in the then wild country called the "Black River region." The third highest peak of the Missouri Ozarks appears on our state map as Ketcherside Mountain.

Like a lot of pioneers, the men were hard and tough. They

prided themselves on the amount of raw whiskey, called rot-gut, which they could gulp down and upon their ability to settle brawls with their fists in bare-knuckle fighting. My great grandfather deserted his family and "shacked up" with a Cherokee Indian woman who had been abandoned when her family died on the frightful "Trail of Tears" march in which many thousands perished while crossing Illinois and Missouri enroute to the Oklahoma Territory.

My great-grandmother was, so I am told, a gentle Scotswoman who still retained the dialect of "Auld Scotia." She kept the family together, and although none of them ever went to school, or learned to read or write, she invested them with a degree of integrity and a reasonable sense of respect. My own grandfather, Woodson Ketcherside, even as a lad, demonstrated qualities which later endeared him to all who knew him. When he first saw my grandmother, Lavina Moses, she was a mere girl, working barefoot in a rocky hill field and wielding a heavy hoe.

As an orphan, she had been indentured to a man for whom she was required by law to work for her "board and keep" until she became eighteen. The lot of such "bound children" in the days before orphan homes was often a difficult one. Taking compassion upon her when she was fifteen, my grandfather-to-be paid off the sum assessed for the final three years and obtained her release. He bought her a pair of shoes and a simple dress and they were married when he was seventeen and she was still but fifteen. I think their union was one of the happiest and most contented I have ever seen. With the opening of the deep-shaft lead mines near Bonne Terre, they moved to a rugged hill farm some three miles from that struggling town, built a log cabin and began to rear their growing family in a kind of wilderness setting where hardship was a way of life and the wolf of hunger was seldom far from the rude door swung on leather hinges.

There was but little chance for an education and the

Coonville school, a couple of miles distant, was in session only sporadically as a wandering teacher came through and arranged to teach a few weeks for a meager pittance while "boarding around" a week at a time in the homes of the scholars in the area. Since the chief aim of the community rowdies was to "run the teacher off" and they felt a sense of abject failure if one remained more than six weeks, opportunities for intellectual development were decidedly limited. The rustic homes were utterly devoid of reading materials. There were no newspapers, magazines or books. Only an occasional Bible was to be found and it was regarded with superstitious awe, as containing a passage which would instantaneously stop nosebleed when read by someone who knew its location in the sacred text.

There were no churches and no regular meetings for religious devotion or instruction. Only when an itinerant Methodist or Baptist preacher rode in along one of the trails and announced "preaching in the schoolhouse" did the folk gather to be exhorted to flee from the wrath to come. A boy was sent on a mule to inform the dwellers in remote cabins about the great event and all came, more for the diversion than for the spiritual uplift. The preachers were hardy, with faces deeply tanned and hands that were calloused. They worked in the fields or in the timber side by side with those who "put them up for the night" and prided themselves that they could lay out a row in the field or hew a beam as straight as "the best of them." They were also fearless and had no qualm about stepping off the platform to walk back and grab a disturbing ruffian by "the nape of the neck and the seat of his breeches" and throw him unceremoniously into the schoolyard. Then dusting off their hands they would invite anyone else who wanted "some of the same" to step forward and request it before they resumed preaching.

As a little lad I used to listen spellbound as my grandfather, who was a master story teller, recounted incidents related to school and church in the backwoods. Always

reverential, while being as courageous as a wildcat, he told about the times he had pitched in to help the preacher, and with the aid of a stick of stove wood or a window-prop had *converted* a lot of toughs from an upright to a prone position. He liked best to tell of a Methodist preacher who was very small in stature and who rode his jaded horse into the community after the last three meetings had been "busted up" by a gang of roughnecks.

The wiser heads tried to dissuade the short, thin man from announcing a meeting but "he allowed as how he could handle it with the help of the Lord." The schoolhouse was crowded to capacity the first night with the better element in fear and trembling, while the boorish louts were scuffling with and pawing at each other in the back. The little preacher stepped behind the teacher's desk and called for silence in order to begin a song to the praise of God. The noise in the rear became louder and more raucous. Nervous tension filled the air.

The preacher calmly said, "We will adjourn to the schoolyard. Follow me, please!" As he walked down the aisle, he was followed by the wondering audience, some of whom whispered that he was scared out and giving up. Without saying another word, when he reached the schoolyard, the preacher stooped down and picked up three walnuts from under a tree, and then yanked a six-shooter out of his hip pocket. One by one he threw the walnuts in the air and without a miss shot them to bits. Then he picked up three more and threw them high into the air at once and cracked all three. The fragments of the walnut shells rained down on the heads of the gaping crowd.

Taking six bullets out of his side pocket the preacher again loaded his gun. His fingers did not tremble. He looked up and said, "We will return to the house. Follow me, please!" The awe-stricken rustics all trooped in behind him. It was still as a morgue when the preacher took his place again. Not a sound disturbed the deathly quiet. Laying his trusty six-shooter on top of the Bible he announced, "I propose to discourse with you

tonight about the Prince of peace and I will tolerate no interruption." There was no interruption to tolerate. If someone shuffled his feet the preacher merely glanced at the gun and the shuffling stopped. The meeting lasted three weeks and "the mourners" were all over the place when "the altar call" was made.

In this kind of rural environment my father finished the third McGuffey Reader and mastered the first part of Ray's Practical Arithmetic. It had to be done "in hitches" as someone later explained it. While still a child he contracted smallpox during an epidemic, and due to lack of proper care, since there were no doctors to summon for advice, one of his eyes was permanently impaired and the muscle in one leg shriveled away and left that limb shorter than the other. This did not interfere with his hunting or "frolicking" as the old-timers referred to almost any activity except hard work. He became a crack-shot with a gun and regularly carried off every prize from the shooting-matches. He also became a fiddle-player of note and this made him extremely popular at the hoe-downs which generally continued all night or until someone got "likkered up" and started a "knock-down-and-drag-out."

He got a job underground when he was not yet sixteen years old and this meant working ten hours per day, six days per week, for eleven cents an hour. Every day, at a time depending upon which shift he worked, he went to the changing-room where he took off his street-clothes, hung them up on hooks, and then put on his wet, dirty, slimy miner's garb. He went to the large can of carbide, filled his lamp, hooked it on the front of his cap, stepped on the cage and made his descent into the bowels of the earth.

Perhaps because he was so young, and felt the need to prove himself among the older hard-bitten miners, he developed a vocabulary of profanity which would have shocked people in almost any other part of the world. When I was grown and

returned to "the Lead Belt" as the area came to be called, grizzled old-timers would search me out and say, "I knowed your Pap when he first went to work underground. He could out-cuss a mule skinner." They said it with a note of envy such as one uses when he speaks of another who has achieved a degree of proficiency in a coveted art which the speaker has not been able to reach.

The young William Ketcherside, if one may judge by the posed photographs taken by wandering photographers, was a rather handsome swaggering young specimen of manhood. When he was "on top" he smoked a pipe filled with Bull Durham, always allowing the string of the tobacco sack to hang from his shirt-pocket in the latest style. When he was underground he could not smoke because of the danger from powder and dynamite, so he took up chewing Brown Mule, and practiced spitting through his front teeth. He was a foul-mouthed and obscene product of a place and a time where you had to be as tough as a hickory sapling to survive.

When the Spirit of God got through to him and transformed him it was one of the most thorough and traumatic changes I have ever known. It is also one of the first things I remember and, of course, it affected my whole future on earth. I must tell you about it, but before I do I want to tell you about my mother, whose parents came to this land as immigrants from the "Old World" as Europe was then designated.

1. Early Years

Mother and Her Danish Kin

Contents

My mother's grandfather was Lars Hansen. He was born of peasant stock in Denmark on February 28, 1829, the year that Hans Christian Andersen gained recognition for his first stage play after he came to Copenhagen from a boyhood of poverty and persecution at Odense. We never knew the original family names of the women our ancestor married in Denmark. Our only existing records show that the first was Mary and she bore him four children— Lars Peter, Christina, John and Nelson. The first became my own maternal grandfather and after he began to grow up, his father became known as "Old Lars" to distinguish him from his son.

After the death of Mary, "Old Lars" married a woman whose name was Karen, and who was eleven years younger than himself. They had a little girl and boy, and it was while the latter was still quite young the lure of this New World became too great for them to resist. The stories of emigrants who found breathing space and living room among the hills and on the wide expanses of prairie and plain sounded a clarion call in a world which had been bled white by the Napoleonic Wars. The Hansens saved what they could and sold what they had and purchased steerage tickets for the family.

My grandmother often told me of the hardships encountered on the six-weeks trip. All food had to be brought

along and in their case it consisted mostly of hard-tack rye bread and cheese. The latter became so moldy it had to be scraped before it could be eaten. All became ill and were so sick and nauseated they could hardly minister to one another for weakness. The little boy died and had to be buried at sea. The emaciated little body was sewn up in sailcloth by a sail-mender. At dusk the little knot of emigrants ascended to the deck where the master of the ship read the Lutheran burial service, at the close of which the weighted body was gently eased overboard and sank from sight in the rolling waves.

On the long journey the Hansens became friends of another emigrating family bearing the name of Mabuce, and learning that they were coming to a place called Missouri, they resolved to stick with them. They eventually settled near Bessville, halfway between Marble Hill and Marquand, a land of rolling hills and spring-fed streams. Three more children, all girls, were borne by Karen, who died on November 14, 1877, still only thirty-seven years of age. "Old Lars" lived on for eleven more years, before he passed away on his fifty-ninth birthday. He was regarded as an aged patriarch in those days when the life-span was much shorter than it is now.

Young Lars Peter had gone to school in Denmark and in the new knowledge conveyed in the village school. He readily learned English but never lapsed in his usage of the tongue he first knew. All of his life he subscribed for newspapers published in Denmark and though they arrived months after they were printed he devoured their contents greedily. He became an adept penman and his letters were models of Spencerian neatness.

When he married Sophia Christensen he found himself with a companion of "the old school." She thought it was a sin to teach children to speak English. She wanted life to be exactly as it was in the towns and villages of Germany and Denmark. To be a Dane in those days was to be a Lutheran, and as the Hansen children were born and grew old enough they were sent to the

parochial school where all recitations were in German and the catechism was the most important class of all. On Sunday the ritual was conducted in German by stern pastors who tolerated no questioning of their authority. The colony in which my mother grew up was a little island in an alien sea of humanity. It was a culture transplanted and imposed upon another culture.

At the age of twelve Anna and her sisters were in the field following the plow in the spring, and in the harvest they were shocking wheat. In the fall and winter the girls hired out in the homes of the wealthy where they were sometimes treated as drudges, arising before daybreak and working until long after darkness fell. The pay was two dollars per week and board. The two dollar wage was dutifully turned over to the parents at the end of every seven days.

One of the older girls, Hulda, met and married a man who worked in the mines and they established a modest home in a "company house" in Cantwell. It was while Anna was visiting for a few days in the home of this sister that William Ketcherside first saw her, a lovely, rosy-cheeked German Fraulein who spoke a delightful dialect which she never completely lost during her lifetime. He courted her with the same zest with which he went at everything else and she agreed to marry him only upon condition that he got the full consent of her father.

That was not easy. A good deal of correspondence must have ensued for the general attitude of people in the German colony was simply stated, "I'd rather follow a girl of mine to her grave than to see her married to a man who is not a Lutheran." The idea of allowing Anna to marry a young agnostic must have produced a great deal of furor, but finally the parents had to give in. Many years later I read the final letter of consent written by my grandfather to the man who was destined to beget me and give me life. It was couched in formal verbiage and was dignified, and almost stately.

It required that the young man who wanted to marry Anna respect her Lutheran faith and never ask her to forsake it or exchange it for something else. It bound him by a solemn covenant to have all the children properly christened by an ordained Lutheran minister, duly instructed in the catechism and confirmed in the Missouri Synod Lutheran Church "as God has instructed in his holy word."

It was probably no great issue with the ardent swain. He knew very little about God, less about the Bible and nothing at all about the Missouri Synod Church. Eighteen months after the wedding when I was born, he made no objection to my being christened. Later my mother told me about it. One of my aunts made my long white christening dress and my mother carried me in her arms almost three miles on a hot day to the Lutheran Church where I was christened by the Reverend Mr. Peterson. The christening certificate is now quite yellow with age. More than fifty years later I went to visit a Lutheran clergyman in a little Arkansas village only to find out that he was the assistant who helped out in the service. It probably took two of them to hold me still and keep me quiet.

I was born in our humble home. There was no hospital anywhere near the area and even if there had been no woman would have gone to it to deliver a child. Many years after the event my grandmother told me about my arrival. When my mother began to feel the pains signifying that her time had come, my father went to get my grandmother who had herself delivered several hundred babes in cabins in the woods. Every woman felt safe if "Aunt Viney" was present during the ordeal. An uncle was dispatched to get Dr. McClellan who was delayed somewhat because his horse had unhooked the stable door and headed for the pasture. Fortunately, with my usual good spirit of cooperation I postponed the happening until the principals were present and we got the signal, "All systems go!"

My mother had prepared a homemade cradle out of an I.

E. Dupont de Nemours powder box which my father had carried home from the mine, and she told me later that I was the loveliest child she had ever seen. She also told the other five the same thing in turn. Nine months after I was born she learned she was again pregnant, and when her second son was born she named him Larsen Rudolph in true Danish fashion as she had named me William Carl in honor of my father and the crown prince of Germany.

Ours must have been a typical home in a mining community. My parents loved each other although I have a faint recollection of my mother weeping as she rocked one of us, because of some misunderstanding which had caused my father to "fly off the handle " and use profanity. Sometimes she shed tears because of her yearning for a sight of the faces of those whom she loved in the community where she was reared, and especially because she was homesick for her father and mother. I wonder now if she missed regular attendance at the Lutheran Church, and if there was a pang in her generous heart because she saw us growing up with no catechetical instruction.

Christmastime must have been especially depressing to her. It was a great season in the German community. For days before there was baking and preparation of all kinds. The house was filled with the pungent odor of spices. There was always a huge tree cut down in the forest and hauled home to be erected in a corner of the living room close to the fireplace. It was strung with popcorn and cranberries for there were no commercial hangings. Christmas brought good feelings and mellowness, helped no little by frequently imbibing homemade wine and brandy brought up from the cellar.

Compared to all this Christmas in a mining village was a drab affair. The decorations consisted of drawings by the children on ruled tablet paper. There was hardly room for a tree but we managed a little one. It was not easy for our parents to select something for us because the company store did not

feature a variety. Each child received an orange and a peppermint candy cane. To make it really Christmas there was a little book or a ten cent toy, a jumping-jack or a set of blocks.

The thing that really topped it off was the box that came from down on the farm of our grandfather. It always contained a dressed goose. No one in the German community ate turkey for Christmas. There was smoked sausage, stuffed and prepared by grandfather himself, for he was a sausage maker of wide reputation. When the box was delivered from the railway station we could hardly wait to open it and see the things which had been selected from the farm and included. Our mother laughed and cried in turn as she took the things out and laid them on the oilcloth-covered table.

Perhaps I recall her times of melancholy more than her moments of joy. There must not have been too much time to devote to the luxury of feeling sorry for herself. There was washing to do on Monday while she bent over the grooved board in the big tub, a board well-rubbed with pungent homemade soap. There was ironing to do on Tuesday with the flatirons heating on the cookstove out in the smokehouse. There was always sewing and mending. The garden had to be tended and fruit and vegetables had to be canned in Mason jars, or sometimes dried in the sun. I can recall mother's frequent repetition of the old homely proverb, "Man works from sun to sun, but woman's work is never done." Yet she always found time to show her love for us and when we were hurt we could go to her with full confidence that she would stop whatever she was doing and gather us into her arms.

1. Early Years

"Ketcherside Town"

Contents

It is difficult to describe a mining town in the early part of the twentieth century to those who live in our present urbanized culture. The village in which I was born, Cantwell, was one of a string of towns on the surface of the earth loosely following the vein of lead hundreds of feet below. There were no city limit markers for there were no city limits. Cantwell, Desloge, Flat River, Elvins, Esther, Rivermines, and others were flung down in a heap as if some giant hand had deposited them with no attempt to gather them into orderly units. Six miles from Cantwell, in the other direction than the towns mentioned, lay Bonne Terre, which means "good earth," so called by the French because of the richness of the ore deposits.

Most of the villages were not incorporated. There was no city government and "every man did that which was right in his own sight." Families tended to huddle together in the same village and Cantwell was sometimes called "Ketcherside town" because some dozen or more frame shacks were occupied by members of our clan. The land was known as "company ground" because it was owned by the mining interests out of New York. There was a row of company houses, all built exactly alike, and anyone who rented them had the five dollars per month extracted from his check on payday.

One could build his own house by leasing a piece of ground

from the company for ninety-nine years, with a carefully spelled out notation in the lease that the right to all minerals below the surface belonged to the company. The company also retained the right to set up a diamond drill anywhere for the purpose of prospecting for ore. A diamond drill had a bit which was set with diamonds and which, by rotating, could cut through the hardest rock, sending a one-inch core to the surface which could be analyzed in the laboratory to determine the direction in which the underground tunnel for taking out the ore should be directed. When a drill was set up it operated night and day and nearby residents did not sleep soundly until they became adjusted to the jarring noise.

There was a company store in our village where all of the miners traded "on time" as credit was designated. Each family had its own account book, and when the storekeeper assembled your purchases on the counter he entered the amounts on a ticket in your book and gave you a duplicate to take home and keep in the spring clip which hung on the wall by the comb case above the wash pan. Everyone used the same towel and comb, and no one used a toothbrush.

On payday the miners lined up at the store to cash their checks and make a payment on the grocery bill. When such a payment was made each miner received a little striped sack of candy called "a treat." It was rumored that if you paid in full you received a double portion, but I cannot testify as to the truthfulness of the rumor because we never paid in full. The company store created a way of life for many people and made of them economic slaves as long as they existed. The idea that you could "buy now and pay later" was dangerous for families like ours which were always on the brink of poverty. The first thing I did when my father was killed was to take the meager amount of insurance remaining and pay off his obligations. It may have been the first time my mother was completely free from debt.

One of my earliest recollections of my boyhood is that of the saloons and the vice associated with them. The saloons were tough joints. They bore such exotic names as "The Blue Goose" and "Klondike" although the one which stood in full sight of our house was called "The Star." Every payday was characterized by a drunken brawl. Frequently the men staggered outside and we saw them crack the skulls of one another with beer or whiskey bottles, the foaming contents mingling with blood and gore flowing from gaping lacerations.

There were always prostitutes hanging around outside the saloon although no one called them that. The men called them "chippies" while the women called them "painted hussies." I used to look through a crack in the fence and watch them take half-soused men into the woods and while I did not know what it was all about I was aware, from what the adults said about them, that it was not "nice."

I remember two occasions which caused those who were referred to as "decent women" to rejoice. One occurred when a little tiny woman got fed up with the "goings-on" and took an axe-handle and laid in wait for the woman who had solicited her husband. Although the chippy was about twice her size and hard as nails, she "worked her over and beat the tar out of her" as I learned by lying on the floor with my ear glued to the crack under the door. This source of information almost proved my undoing, for one day when the gossip was not especially interesting I fell asleep, and someone threw the door open and flattened me against the wall.

The other time of gladness occurred early on a Christmas morning when the village was awakened with the yell of "Fire!" The Star saloon was aflame. A goodly number of neighbors gathered in front of our gate to watch the welcome sight. Bottles burst like machine-gun fire and bottle caps whined through the air like bullets. The women alternately cried and laughed for joy, hugging one another and saying it was a divine judgment

and the greatest gift God could have given on Christmas. The saloon was never rebuilt and the chippies all left except for the two who continued to receive customers after dark at the third house up the street from us, the one next to the chat dump, as the massive tailing-pile composed of crushed rock from underground was called.

Life was not unpleasant for us although we were under stern instructions never to step a foot outside the yard without permission. Every yard had a wire fence around it because the area surrounding the village was "open range." This meant that anyone could turn his cows and hogs out to roam at will. Animals were not fenced in, but fenced out. Each family had its own earmark, which meant that all of its animals had pieces cut out of their ears for identification. One man might say to another, "If you see a sow with a bit on the front side of the right ear and a swallow-fork in the left, please tell me, as it is my hog, and I want to put her up."

Sometimes in the middle of the night a family of razorback hogs would put their snouts under the fence and pry up the wire and creep in under it. They would literally clean out a garden before daybreak. Most of the houses were built up off the ground and set on rock pillars at the corners. This was to avoid damp rot and termites, but it also provided a shady place for the dogs to lie and scratch fleas. One morning our neighbor arose to see that her garden had been devastated during the night. As she looked out of the kitchen window she saw the north end of a southbound lanky sow protruding from under her house. She carefully heated a dishpan of water to the boiling point and poured it on the rear half of the razorback but was wholly unprepared for the cataclysmic result. As the sow departed for fairer regions she knocked the back porch off the house and took with her the underpinning from one corner, leaving the bedroom aslant and the furniture slowly slipping down toward the outside wall. Life in the village was not always drab and unexciting.

Although we could not go outside our yard we could always play with the children on either side "through the fence." There were two girls on one side and a boy and girl on the other. Their mothers "took in washing" and worked hard over the scrub-board every day. We were never allowed to mention their fathers because both men were in "the state pen." One was doing time for murder and the other for stealing stuff from the lead company. This last was not regarded as a crime by anyone except the lead company.

Every day we made mud pies and other articles and played store. We cut "money" out of the pages of a Sears-Roebuck catalog hanging in the toilet, and used bottle-caps for "change." The situation was complicated due to the fact that everyone wanted to be the storekeeper and take in the cash. We settled the question by putting a counter on each side of the fence and the storekeepers sold to each other. As my little sisters began to grow up they always wanted to play house, and wanted their brothers to be the papas and come home with their dinner buckets and kiss the dolls like our father kissed us. It was years later that I realized the neighbor children never wanted to play house. They had no father to come home and kiss them.

As I think back upon my childhood I recall one woman who said to my mother, "All children are different, but Carl's differenter than any youngun' I've ever seed." That was because of my utter fascination with printed words. It became an obsession with me. I carried the mail order catalog around with me and every time someone came who could read, and there were not that many of them, I'd thrust the catalog into their hands, point to a description of an article and ask, "What does that say?" In my innocence, bred of ignorance, I sometimes pointed to something embarrassing, and they would quickly flip the pages over to the farm machinery. I soon learned which pages were off limits although I did not then know why they were.

I had to do the buying at the company store by the time I was five because my mother could not read English. When I bought something, if there was no other customer in the store, I'd ask Mr. Watson to read the labels on the cans and boxes. He not only did so but taught me to read on *Clabber Girl* baking powder cans, *Arm and Hammer* bicarbonate of soda boxes, and *Old Dutch Cleanser* and *Bon Ami* containers. He saved reading material which was undeliverable in the little post office, and apparently told others about me because they brought their Horatio Alger books to pass along to me. If there were too many to carry home with the groceries I'd leave the groceries at the store and take the books home first. I knew my mother would make me go back after the groceries but might not let me go back for the books.

One of the proudest days of my life was the one on which I started to school in the little two-room village educational plant. The folk had managed to save and secure my first pair of new store-bought knickerbockers, as knee-length pants were called. My blouse, as boys' shirts with a puckering string at the waist were then called, was home-made. So was my underwear which bore the bold label across the seat, "Gold Medal Flour—Eventually, Why Not Now?" I took my lunchbox in one hand, and my slate and Elson-Runkel first reader in the other and marched off bravely. I stopped at the corner and looked back. Mother was standing in the door. The early morning September sunshine bathed her presence. She was drying her tears with her apron. She knew life would never be the same. And she was right!

1. Early Years

Uncle L. E. and the Sand-Hillers

Contents

The great change in our lives, one which was destined eventually to affect almost the entire Ketcherside clan, actually began with one man. My father's brother, Lewis, always called by his initials L. E., was very close to him. He was less than two years younger, and in their boyhood days they had been inseparable. My uncle was married the year that I was born. Even before he was married he had begun to sense a yearning deep inside himself for some relationship with the power to provide hope and assurance by enabling him to overcome tendencies and temptations which troubled his sensitive soul. The new responsibility as a very young husband drove him to talk to my father about his feelings. My father laughed in his face and made crude jokes about it.

The Baptist Church was the only one in our village. In the period between revivals it was always in the doldrums, but twice per year, in the spring and autumn, a fire-eating preacher was imported and all of the members were infused with new life and got on a spiritual high. Backsliders wept over their lapses. Alcoholics vowed to renounce liquor. Sinners were exhorted to flee from the wrath to come. The night L. E. went to the tent which had been erected on a lot adjacent to "the church," the preacher happened to be a rough-looking specimen from the backwoods, who chewed tobacco and murdered the King's English. But he knew the Bible!

As he reeled off verse after verse from memory, L. E. was fascinated, and then captivated by the fact that God had spoken, and that we had access to His words, written down in plain English so every man could read them for himself. It was the first time in his life he had ever known what the Bible really was. That night, sitting in an audience of perspiring villagers, under a hot canvas, he resolved that, if God spared him, he would learn the divine will for his life.

He did not sleep that night, but lay awake thinking, meditating and praying. The next day underground he went about his tasks mechanically, and as soon as the whistle blew he ascended on the cage, and left the changing-room to go straight to the home where the revivalist was staying. Years afterward, when we worked together very closely, he told me all about it more than once, and always with the smile for which he was noted. He told the preacher he had already prayed all night and day. The preacher asked him what he felt and he said that he felt like he wanted to do what Jesus said and do it at once. After about an hour, the backwoods evangelist said it wasn't much of an experience, as experiences generally went, but he reckoned it would have to do. That night the Baptists voted to accept his experience and qualify him for baptism. The community was dumbfounded. To convert a Ketcherside was like the bringing of Saul of Tarsus to bay. And at the end of the revival the converts were all baptized in the swimming-hole in the small river. L. E. went straight home, changed into dry clothing and started in on the Bible.

Two weeks later he announced to the local Baptist preacher that he wanted to preach the gospel he had obeyed. At a district meeting of Baptist preachers it was agreed that he was an unlikely candidate, but there was no way of discouraging him short of shooting him. It was decided that, since he was too poor to go away to college, and did not have the entrance requirements anyway, not having finished the fifth-reader, he should study for a year at home, at the end of which time he

would stand for examination before three ordained Baptist ministers, and if he met their approbation he would be licensed as a supply preacher for the unstaffed rural churches.

During that year L. E. became a real problem to all of his friends and relatives. Some of his former cronies were convinced that he was "touched in the head." He gave up going to shooting-matches, which gave the other contestants a chance to win. He wouldn't play cards. He quit drinking beer. My father said he was making "a damned nuisance" out of himself and if he didn't quit spouting the Bible at everyone he met he would lose the only worthwhile friends he ever had and end up with no one to talk to but a bunch of sickly, white-livered Christians. My father considered this a fate to which death should be readily preferred.

At the end of the year L. E. put on the suit he had worn at his wedding, the only dress-up clothing he owned, and met with the Baptist tribunal. They questioned him for three hours and it soon became apparent that he knew far more about the Bible than did his questioners. For every query his reply was "The Bible says." When one of the preachers said about one quotation, "I don't remember ever seeing that in the Bible," he picked up the man's book from the table and read it to him. At the end of the examination his questioners retired to a room for consultation. They left L. E. sitting at the table awaiting their decision about his future course.

When they returned the spokesman said, "We cannot approve of you to do supply work or recommend you to the churches. In fact, we are convinced you would kill every Baptist Church in the district if you advanced the ideas you have set forth today. You are not a Baptist at all but a Sand-hiller." L. E. had never heard of a Sand-hiller, so he asked what one was. The reply was unhesitating. "A Sand-hiller is a special brand of Campbellite, and the worst enemy the church has, and you sound just like one." The answer did not mean much to L. E. He

did not know what a Campbellite was either, but he left the place with a firm resolution to find out.

The following Tuesday he was assigned a new man to help carry the tripod and set up the drill which rested on it, and with which holes were drilled in the face of the underground wall for tamping in explosives. While they were eating lunch from their dinner-pails at noon, L. E. said to the man, "Did you ever hear of a religious bunch called Sand-hillers?" "I sure have," answered the man, "I'm one of them myself." He then proceeded to tell him this was a nickname given to them by the Baptists because they had originated down in the sand-hills about thirty miles south, and some of them had moved into the mining area to find work. He arranged for L. E. to meet a merchant who was an elder of the Church of Christ, and the first evening they talked together they continued their speech until midnight. L. E. walked the three miles to his home and arose early to work all day in the mines.

He was hungry for the word, and began to attend the meetings in Flat River, a five-mile round trip each time. There was no preacher but anyone of the men in the congregation could teach, exhort and admonish. Sometimes as many as three would take turns speaking briefly. They convinced L. E. that one could be just a Christian and a Christian only. He became convinced of their plea to be simply the church mentioned in the scriptures. But when he expressed a desire to be affiliated with the little group a lengthy interrogation ensued, led by some who insisted he would have to be baptized again. He resisted on the basis that he had obeyed the Lord. Most of the members were ready to accept him, but two or three became very belligerent, and to avoid further friction he finally consented to be immersed. In later years he always said, "I was baptized twice. The first time was to obey Jesus Christ, the second time to placate and appease the Church of Christ."

Almost single-handedly he changed the village of Cantwell.

He visited every house in town, including the one occupied by the saloon-keeper and his fashionable wife. He invited everyone to gather in his front yard each evening to hear the Bible explained. It was somewhere to go and relieve the tedium and the people came. Many of them carried hickory splint-bottom chairs on which to sit. Others sat on the ground or leaned on the picket fence. With a kerosene lantern hanging on the porch post and casting its sickly gleam upon the printed page, while moths and other insects flitted about, L. E. read and expounded. He was one with his audience. Many of them had known him from the time he was a lad. He went down into the mines with them everyday. He had helped them all with any task that was too great for them. Now he shared with them every night what he learned during the day.

When his shift underground was finished he took time to talk with men and women about their souls before he slept. He baptized his brothers and their wives. He baptized his two sisters. The day he baptized "Blind Emmy," his cousin who had been born sightless, the whole community walked down to the creek for the occasion. When the poor blind woman was brought up from the water she raised her hands toward heaven and began to shout for joy. Caught up in the emotional excitement of the moment they led her up the road toward the village, shouting as she went. Some tried to quiet her, thinking she was "going out of her mind." But it was as if she had not heard them. Other women began to weep, and men began to cry out to God to have mercy upon them. Years later, when I led "Blind Emmy" from door to door to sell "products" she told me that she saw Jesus "as plain as day." I wondered how one who had never seen the form of a man and had never even seen her own face in a mirror, could see Jesus. But I didn't say anything or ask any questions. I am glad now I did not.

An electrifying current swept over the community with the exception of one home— ours! Being a Lutheran, my mother could not attend the studies in the front-yard up the street. She

would like to have gone because she loved people and the socialization before and after the study would have meant a lot to her. Women used such occasions to trade seeds for flowers that others admired, or to tell what they were eating out of their gardens, and all of this would have meant much to mother. But it would also have caused her to "go back on her raising" and she couldn't do that.

When my father went and sat outside the circle of light across the dusty street, he returned home aggravated and angry. He told my mother that his favorite brother had somehow allowed bats to occupy his belfry and to observe it was a crying shame that an otherwise good man would permit himself to be ruined by religion and waste time in which he could be doing something useful for people, by standing on his front porch talking like an idiot.

Years later when we were all one in Christ, mother told me that she knew even then that L. E. was having an effect on my father. He became too angry and fumed around too much. Moreover, he poured a pipe full of tobacco out of the Bull Durham sack, lighted it, took one draw on it, and then absent-mindedly knocked it out against the heel of his hand. That had never happened before. My father became short-tempered and snapped at my mother when she spoke to him. He had never done that before either. The Spirit was moving in for the kill!

1. Early Years

The Day My Father Was Baptized

Contents

It was early evening and the sun was only beginning to slant toward the west when my father came out of our little house to sit down on the top step and smoke his pipe. My brother and I sat down on the bottom step on opposite sides so each of us could lean against his legs. This was almost a ritual. Miners who worked the day shift always ate an early supper and then sat out in the front yard to relax and try to cool off before time to go to bed and get some rest as a preparation for going underground the next morning. In the curious jargon of the miners, who had their own word for everything, this was called "hog-eying" but I do not know why.

I only recall that my brother and I were always glad when our father came out to "hog-eye" and it made us feel proud to sit down and lean against him. Miners did not tell people they loved them, but our father did not need to do that. It would have seemed a little silly to say something you already knew. While we were sitting there, not saying anything, but just glad to be together, our uncle L. E. came by and stopped at the front gate. We all liked him a lot! He never became angry and he knew how to treat folks. He even talked to us boys as if we were grown-up men. That is why we felt kind of sad inside that he had "gone nuts over religion" and started "going to church every time someone jerked the bell-rope" as our father said.

We knew he was on his way to another meeting in Flat River and that he would climb the huge chat dump and cross the high railroad trestle which had been haunted ever since a miner slipped from it one night and was killed when he landed on the rocks below. Some of our neighbors heard his ghost shriek as it was falling again on dark nights. Uncle L. E. leaned on the gate and talked a little about veins and stopes and levels and other underground stuff, and then said, "Well, I'd better be shoving off. I dare you to come and go along with me."

The two of us on the bottom step looked at each other and grinned. We knew what our father would say even though we hated to see him cut our favorite uncle down. We couldn't believe what happened. Our father knocked his pipe out against the edge of the top step. He got up and we thought maybe he was going to fight our uncle. But he said, "I never took a dare in my life, and by God, I don't intend to take one now. Wait till I get my hat." We watched the two of them walk off together toward the chat dump and we were hurt and angry. We felt betrayed and sold out. Tears came to my eyes. I hated religion which broke up good times that were quiet and peaceful and which took a father away from his boys.

The next evening we were just playing around in the yard waiting for our father to come out and "hog-eye" so we could sit beside him and lean against him. But he didn't come out very soon and when he did he had his hat on. We watched with foreboding as L. E. came again. We walked to the gate with our father. He patted both of us on the head. We could feel the roughness of his palm with the hard callouses from the pick and shovel. I watched until the two of them climbed the chat dump where they were momentarily silhouetted against the evening sky and then they disappeared from sight. I ran blubbering to the backyard. I jerked a bean-pole out of the garden and began to savagely beat the rear wall of the summer-kitchen. The neighbor kids were on their knees looking through the fence. One of them yelled, "Whatcha doin'?" I acted as if I did not

hear. I wanted to die.

It was about a week later, and we were sitting at the supper table when my father said to my mother, "Annie, I am going to be baptized." My mother did not become angry. She spoke softly but firmly, "I knew you would be, but please do not ask me to go and see it. And don't ever ask me to change from what I grew up in. Never!" My father said, "I'll take the boys to see it." Mother replied, "I can't keep you from doing that, but don't forget you signed your word to rear them in the Lutheran Church, and please remember what you've said about this religion that L. E. has talked you into."

It was about a mile over to the company pond and when we got there on Sunday afternoon a crowd of strange people had already gathered and were waiting. They stood around talking until one of the men took out his watch, looked at it, and then held up his hand to get attention. He began to speak about how my father had repented of his sins. I didn't like that because I did not know my father had any sins. The man continued that he had made the good confession and was going to be buried in baptism. I didn't like the word "buried" either, because when people were buried you didn't see them again. The crowd began to sing a song called "Happy Day" and my father walked out into the water with a man. When they got to the right place they stopped, the man raised his hand and said something and then buried my father out of sight. It was years later I realized that I never again saw the father who was buried.

All of the Cantwell people who had gone to the pond walked back with us, and they all talked to my father whose wet clothes clung to him as he walked. We turned in at our gate and my father went in and changed into a dry outfit. When he came into our other room, he lifted the lid on the cookstove and threw his pipe into the glowing embers. He threw his plug of chewing tobacco and his sack of chewing tobacco and his sack of Bull Durham into the trash sack by the woodbox. One of his nephews

dropped by and my father gave him his fiddle together with an extra supply of resin for the bow. "I'll not be needing it again," he said. Two days later when he gave away his treasured Marlin shotgun, my mother became convinced he had lost his mind.

On Monday evening my brother and I were out in the yard again. We did not know if our father would come out or not. Our fears were relieved, for he came and sat down on the top step. We sat down on the lower one as usual. He did not have his pipe but he had a book which L. E. had given him. "Boys," he said, "this is a Bible and it is the word of God. God lives up in heaven and he loves us, and because he does, he gave us this book to tell us how he wants us to live. I don't know much about it yet but I intend to learn what's in it, and I want you to know also. I'm going to read it out loud and that way we will all learn."

We leaned against him and listened as he read. He took it slowly, like one treading unfamiliar ground and that was good. After awhile he closed the book and said, "That's enough for this evening." He began to ask us simple questions about what he had read and when we knew an answer he patted us on the head and made us feel good. I knew then that my fears had been premature. I still had my father and this was the best way to "hog-eye" in the world, with someone you loved reading to you. I wished that our mother could share with us but she couldn't. She said she didn't trust the Bible written in English, and she wished we could understand it in German like Herr Luther had fixed it up. When she talked about other men she called them "Mister" but she always spoke of her favorite hero as "Herr Luther."

Almost every day L. E. stopped by and he and my father talked about the Bible and turned to it to read things they had found in it. My brother was too young to care, but I lay on the grass between them when they brought their chairs out under the cherry tree and listened to every word. They were always

explaining to one another what they thought something meant and you could tell they loved it. I loved it too, although I didn't know all it was saying. And every day our father read to us. God came to mean about everything to us and nothing else really mattered.

L. E. and my father wanted to start a church in our village. They said it was too far for everyone to walk to Flat River. They decided to start meeting in a grove of trees, and they made seats which were just planks laid across two-by-fours. The two men went to every house and invited everyone to come for the first Sunday. I had never really been to a church because my father had promised before I was born that I would be raised in the Lutheran church. But now he said to my mother, "I'd like to take the boys with me when Sunday rolls around." We added our pleas and mother said, "All right, go on. It isn't really a church anyhow when a bunch of people meet in the woods."

It was hot and dry and dusty when Sunday morning came, but when we got to the grove it was cool in the shade. The Ketchersides whom L. E. had baptized were all there. Some others he had baptized were there also. The songbooks which had been loaned by Flat River were passed out to the grown folks, but L. E. said, "Give the boys books also." It made us feel big to have our own books with the name *Voices for Jesus* on the front. A man had come from Flat River with the books to lead the singing and when he had finished, my father read a chapter and then prayed. L. E. gave a little talk, my father following by telling about a verse he had read and what he thought God was saying in it.

An old man got up to "wait on the table" but he started to cry and couldn't say anything, so L. E. got up and said the tears were nothing to be ashamed of for the old man had been baptized when he was a boy but had not seen the table of the Lord set for years. He called on my aunt to give thanks and she prayed better than any of them. Later, my father told me it was

because she was in practice, that she had prayed every day for him for ten years. Before we finished we all got up and walked to the table and put money on the white cloth. My brother and I marched up with the others and put the pennies on the table which our father had passed on to us. I looked longingly at mine lying there by the dimes and the one quarter. I wished I could have kept it and gone with it to the company store but there was no way I could do it.

After everyone had shaken hands and hugged one another and cried and laughed we all went home with grandfather and grandmother. My father let us walk with them while he went home to help our mother carry the baby. I heard one of the men say that my grandfather was in "hog heaven" because so much company was going to his place. He loved company. While the women were busy in the kitchen the men sat out on the front porch which was shaded by a clematis vine filled with flowers. They talked about getting a place to meet before the rains set in. L. E. was an excellent carpenter and he suggested buying an old saloon building, cutting it in two, and moving it to a lot in the village and joining it together again. No one had ever seen this done, but he was convincing. They agreed to borrow the hundred dollars for purchase of the saloon. L. E. said that we would give those who came a different sort of drink than they had ever been served across the bar.

1. Early Years

Life In Our First Meetinghouse

Contents

It makes a difference when a congregation gets a meetinghouse of its own. There are some things about it that are good, and there are others that are not. The plan to purchase the old saloon building and move it to a new location worked like a charm. Even though it was before the days of chain saws, the men cut it in two and then fitted it back together on the lot which was a few hundred feet from the location of the Baptist building. To make it look more like a "church building," a bell-tower was erected on the front which never housed a bell. It was a luxury which could not be afforded.

The very first meeting in the new location was noticeably different. It was more formal and "churchy." We had been meeting in the grove on good days, and in the little living-room in our grandfather's home on cold and rainy days. The grove was the best place. Sometimes while we were singing grandfather's favorite song, "My latest sun is sinking fast, my race is nearly run," you could look up at the fleecy white clouds and imagine that they were "the angel band" ready to bear you away on their snowy wings to your immortal home. Occasionally, one of the dogs would chase a squirrel right down among the benches and up a hickory tree behind the Lord's Table. There is only one other thing on earth that can equal a dog in enlivening an open air meeting, and that is a three foot blacksnake.

Even on bad days it always was interesting. The children sat on the old rag carpet which "Aunt Peggy" had made on a loom. If they got tired they could stretch out and take a nap and no one cared. Aunt Peggy was a half-Cherokee Indian who had befriended our grandmother when she was an orphan girl and later on came to live with my grandparents. The deep wrinkles in her brown face bore mute testimony to a life of toil and privation. Aunt Peggy didn't "go to church" but when the church came to her on rainy days she did not budge from her splint-bottom chair in front of the fireplace. She smoked a little clay pipe "during meeting" the same as at any other time, and it was interesting to see her make a "V" out of her fingers and put them to her mouth and spit. She never missed, and if a stray fly was unfortunate enough to walk into range along the hearth, she neatly picked him off with an amber jet, regardless of what the worshipers around her were doing at the moment. I remember that during prayer we children always kept one eye closed for God's sake, and the other one open and focused on Aunt Peggy who seemed almost as old and even more interesting to us than God at the time.

When we moved into the "church building" we children felt "boxed in" and things might have seemed very dry if it had not been for our grandfather who sometimes enlivened the scene because he was so deadly serious about everything that pertained to God. He had been crippled by a premature blast underground which had injured his spine when rocks rained down upon him, and although he surprised the company doctors after they had predicted his death, he was doomed to walk quite stooped and bent over the remainder of his life. The company gave him token employment in the warehouse where one of his tasks was to reduce the rodent population. On Wednesday he moved sacks of cattle feed and boxes of other commodities all day long and killed whatever rats he could with a long stick.

The old man was dog-tired when he came to meeting and almost as soon as he sat down in the corner of the front seat he

fell into a deep sleep. It was while our uncle L. E. was on the platform that grandfather suddenly jumped to his feet and began poking under the seats and flailing about with his cane while shouting, "Get him! Get him! There he goes! Hit him! Hit him!" Uncle L. E. called out to him but he did not hear. He was having a "rat-killing" good time in his sleep and took a healthy swipe at our bare feet which we hastily drew up in the seat. After my father had captured him and shaken him back to the world of reality and sat him down in his accustomed place, the proceedings seemed quite dull by comparison and we watched him anxiously, hoping he would fall asleep again. But he did not and the fun was over for that night.

Even when he was awake our grandfather often got things gloriously mixed up or said them backwards. It was the idea of L. E. that the whole congregation should be taught the whole word, and to achieve this objective he would read and explain a chapter while the audience followed along with open Bibles. Of course our grandfather could not read, but he always listened intently with his hand cupped behind his ear. Once when the subject matter was Judges 15, which records how Samson slew a thousand Philistines with the jawbone of an ass, L. E. finished the text and asked that the books be closed while he questioned the hearers. When he got to my grandfather, he asked, "Pap, can you tell me how Samson slew the thousand men?" The old man was happy that he knew the answer. "He hit 'em over the ass with a jawbone, son, yes sir, that's the way he killed the whole passel of 'em," was the reply.

I could write all day and not exhaust the fascinating things that took place in this little gathering of humble and sincere people, but I must not tarry that long. Even the lives of us children were changed by the religious emphasis which now involved us seven days a week. We turned from playing house or store to "playing church." Each morning we saved the left-over biscuits which were generally thrown over the fence to the pig, and these, together with a glass of water formed the emblems of

our memorial service. The grape arbor was our "church house" and the congregation consisted of my younger brother and sister, two dolls (one of which was losing sawdust from a gaping wound in the lower abdomen), and myself. Our pup came to the first service, lying on the ground with his head between his paws, and seemingly enjoying it. But after we baptized him in the galvanized tub under the rain spout he forsook the church and returned to the world. Our father told us not to feel badly about it because the Bible said, "Without are dogs."

Our meetings were held every thirty minutes and began with snatches of songs sung from imaginary books and led by my little brother. Sometimes he forgot the words and would have to improvise but that did not matter. We made a joyful noise unto the Lord. I was the preacher and I laid it on loud and heavy with such phrases as I could recall, and when I ran out of the remembered phrases, pounding the box in front of me and exhorting the two dolls to repent and be baptized. Regardless of their repentance, they were baptized several times daily, while we stood around the tub and sang, "O happy day that fixed my choice." The neighbor children next door watched through the fence, feeling left out and not knowing what we were doing. With their father in the "state pen" they had never seen a religious gathering.

The acquisition of "our own place of worship" as folks phrased it, made it possible for us to have "protracted meetings," and start seriously to separate the chaff from the grain in the village, so that the chaff could be burned with unquenchable fire, while we stood by and watched from the golden portals. The first "evangelist" I ever heard was Daniel Sommer. He was booked for a meeting at Flat River and the brethren there "loaned him" to Cantwell to help our little group "get started off on the right foot." He was an imposing figure, sixty-five years old, and priding himself upon his physical strength and endurance. He wore a knee-length double-breasted alpaca clerical-style coat, and when he took his stand on the

platform he thrust his right foot forward and placed his hand in the front of his coat in a Napoleonic pose and his voice boomed out with authority.

Although I was but a mere lad when I first heard him I can recall lying on the grass under the shade of a tree and listening to him as he talked to men during the daytime. He felt he had saved the church from complete apostasy by reading his composition "An Address and Declaration" at Sand Creek, a rural congregation near Windsor, Illinois. In it he called for withdrawal from those who endorsed and condoned the church holding festivals to raise money, select choirs to do the singing, man-made societies for missionary work, and the one-man imported preacher-pastor system. He could quote from memory his closing sentence, "If they do not turn away from such abominations, we can not and will not regard them as brethren."

The church had split before I came along and instrumental music had received the blame since it was visible to the eye. Now, Brother Sommer was preparing to "arraign the new digressives" on a hundred items. The "new digressives" were those who opposed instrumental music and missionary societies but who were "aping the sects" by creating a salaried ministry, or hireling pastor system. Brother Sommer envisioned the "so-called Christian colleges" as posing the greatest threat to the simple faith. He referred to them as "preacher factories" and warned that they would some day control the church through their alumni groups. One of his favorite words was "arraign" and he seldom finished an article in opposition to someone without formally "arraigning" him for a long list of items.

I suspect it gave us an ego trip to have someone come from as far away as Indiana to speak for us. In a day when a lot of people had never even been to the county seat, Indiana seemed as far away as the North Pole. When you added to it the fact that the speaker had been to college and was the author of several books as well as being an editor of a religious journal, it was

enough to make your head swim. Even the Baptists couldn't top that so they stayed away from our meetings as we did from theirs. They stayed away because they couldn't stand the truth; we stayed away because we couldn't stand to hear error advocated.

The second preacher who came was William Grant Roberts. He had studied to be a debater and had gained a reputation as a "bold challenger of the sects" and as being "rough on rats." Sectarians and rats were in the same category. In every public discourse, Brother Roberts debated with an imaginary adversary, carrying both sides of the controversy. He never lost such a discussion. Secure in the truth and standing firm on the rock he constantly rebuked denominational pastors who were not present for "spewing out their flopdoodle gush" as he referred to false doctrine.

He specialized in debating Mormons and Baptists, but took on anyone, sometimes having to study up to see what some group believed after having signed a proposition. If anyone asked him if he was hesitant about mixing with a formidable opponent, he assured them he would "tack his hide on the barn door with the bloody side out." His debate in Flat River with a Methodist preacher by the name of Mothershead was characterized by such sharpness and sarcasm, that a complete generation had to pass before the hostility was alleviated. We won the debate and lost the world!

1. Early Years

Critical Times During World War I

Contents

The little congregation made its greatest progress under the efforts of the men who constituted it. No other argument for the power of the gospel was as strong as that of the lives of men who had been completely transformed. Rude miners, listening to a man imported from afar to convert them, had little hope of ever becoming like such a well-dressed professional who harangued them nightly, but they could identify with those who daily descended into the shaft on the same cage with them. So effective did L. E. become that when he was assigned a new partner on his drill the rest of the miners said, "Well there goes another future member of the Campbellites." And they were more often correct than not.

L. E. and my father were not content to keep the gospel in our village. They thought it should be sounded out and not sounded in. They lived for the study of the Word and wherever they could band together a few saints in some backwoods schoolhouse they "set them to keeping house for the Lord." On Sunday one of them would go and instruct the people and I can recall that, as a lad of less than seven years, I walked six miles with my father to a schoolhouse out in the timber, and I walked back home again in the hot afternoon sun. I was so tired I fell asleep on the floor just inside the front door and never knew who transferred me to the pallet on which we children slept in the summertime.

It appeared that God was smiling upon the little group when catastrophe struck for us, and the whole course of life was suddenly and rudely changed. We had moved out of the shack in which I was born, into a four-room house closer to the company store. My father, in a moment of reckless abandon, had made an offer of six hundred dollars for the house, and his bid was accepted. My mother was unquestionably proud of it. She moved in, with the fond hope of sometime purchasing a Congoleum floor covering for our living-room, and by dint of saving and hoarding nickels and dimes she was able to accumulate the six dollars required in a few months. When the rug was unrolled, smelling new and fresh like linseed oil, we were not allowed to walk across it, but had to step carefully around and walk on that portion of the floor which was not covered.

My father had always been troubled with a cough. Sometimes at night he would have to get up and sit in a chair, but no one thought much about it for all of the miners, with few exceptions, coughed hard and long. But when my father could no longer get his rest, regardless of the shift he worked, my mother persuaded him to go see Dr. McClellan. He was reluctant to do so, thinking it was both foolish and an unnecessary expense. But he finally consented to go and when he returned home we knew something was seriously wrong. Our mother went about her work crying, and we could hear her talk to my father about "making a move." Years later I learned that our family physician had diagnosed "Miner's consumption," since no one used "silicosis" in those days. My father was told that his only chance to survive was to get out of mines and go to a colder climate.

It must have been a frightening experience since there were now six children and one of them a babe in arms. Somehow they broke the news to us and it seemed incredible. My father had written to the *Apostolic Review***, edited by Daniel Sommer, and had stated in its columns the need to make a change. He expressed a desire to locate where there was a "loyal**

congregation" in which he could assist by taking his turn in teaching and doing personal work. He received a reply from Marshalltown, Iowa and after several letters were exchanged it was decided we should go there. The congregation offered to help my father find a job and a house in which to live.

Only one who lived in a tightly-knit village at the beginning of the twentieth century can understand the unforgettable shock created when a family was forced to leave for another area. In our present mobile society it is absolutely impossible to portray.

For days before we left, relatives and friends gathered to help pack and weep, and generally get in the way. The women clung to our mother and tears flowed freely as they wailed and expressed the thought they would never meet again.

Mother took all six of us on the train to see her immediate family and our grandfather Hansen met us at McBride's Station with the big wagon drawn by a span of skittish mules. It was great fun sitting on the old quilt placed over the bed of straw in the back and riding the six miles to the farm. Our grandmother, who was very heavy, came waddling out of the house, speaking German with such rapidity that even our mother could not keep up. She had cooked every Danish and German recipe she had ever known and we ate to repletion. I drew the biscuit with the fly in it. There were no screens for the doors and windows and I never recall eating at that grandmother's home without having a fly in one of the biscuits.

All the folk from the transplanted old world colony came to bid us farewell. My mother was always one of their favorites. Grandfather, who was a great wine maker, freely handed around samples of his handiwork and as the night wore on and tongues became more lubricated it sounded like a wedding celebration in a Bavarian bierstube. The next day we left, but as we looked back we could see all the members of the family

standing on the front porch and waving.

When we left the village of Cantwell it was as if someone had died. We went on the local train to Saint Louis where we changed to the Wabash line at Union Station. I had never seen such a throng as filled this great structure and how our parents managed to get six wide-eyed children through the shoving mob I shall never know. As we passed through the great midway, a newsboy was standing at the top of the stairs hawking his papers. I have never forgotten the words he was yelling, "Saint Louis Globe-Democrat, telling of the allies' great victory in France!" The British troops under Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig had made a breakthrough.

I must spare you further details of the journey, vivid as they are to me. One of the leaders, S. M. Brees, met us at the Marshalltown station in a huge Velie touring car and took us to the home of another elder, Alexander Campbell Blake, with whose family we were to lodge until our furniture arrived by train and could be unpacked. The people were all good to us, but we were out of place, like strangers in a strange land. Even the polite formality seemed cold to us. We were hill-folk, villagers and country people, wholly unsuited to a city existence in the north. We were glad when we could move into the humble place we had rented on the outskirts of the city.

There were some things we had never had before, such as electric lights, running water in the house, and a bathroom. At first it seemed awkward and inappropriate to have "a privy" inside the same house in which you lived, but we soon became accustomed to it and were especially thankful for it on days when the rain came down in torrents or an Iowa blizzard swept across the land. I suspect that my parents sensed from the start that it was an untimely move, but it was too late to do anything about it then. We were broke, and we suffered as only the poor can suffer during wartime.

Our father secured employment scraping or fleshing hides at the H. Willard Son and Company tannery. It was a dirty, stinking job and his cough was intensified by the dampness of the place and the vats in which he had to labor. Crippled though he was, he took a job with a moving and storage firm and stuck with it through a cold winter. We could barely make ends meet. The wartime economy had driven sugar up to the incredible level of twenty-five cents per pound. Flour was rationed and government stamps issued for other commodities. And, right in the midst of our other woes, the influenza pandemic struck us all down. Each day the paper told us of hundreds of deaths. In many areas there was no one strong enough to dig graves and the corpses accumulated. We were sure that some of us would die but we survived, although we were so weak and anemic we could hardly stand.

Through it all we never failed to study the Word daily and to cling to our faith in God as our only hope. My father attended every meeting of the saints, taking the two of us boys with him when we were able to walk the long distance on the crunchy snow. There was never a meeting that prayers were not offered for the war to cease and our men to return home. On every side people could be heard referring to the Kaiser as "the antichrist." It was freely predicted that these were the last days and that World War I was the battle of Armageddon. It was believed that the conflict would be terminated with the coming of Jesus. I shall never forget the celebration of the signing of the Armistice on November 11, 1918, four years, three months and fourteen days after Austria-Hungary began it all by a declaration of war upon Serbia. In those four years there were a total of 37,494,186 casualties, men killed, wounded and missing.

I was ten years old when it ended, and already it had been decided we could not make it in the city. For a year we had survived on an unvarying diet of pork neckbones and potatoes, with only an occasional dish of kraut to relieve the monotony. It was all we could afford. We would have to admit defeat and go

to a smaller town.

It was not all a loss, for in Marshalltown I was introduced to the first Carnegie Library I had ever seen. I read a book per day and sometimes more. A free library opened up for me a great new world in which I stuffed my mind like a hungry urchin would his stomach at a picnic.

We moved to Gilman City, a little north Missouri town, where the only dwelling we could rent was an abandoned railroad section house. When we moved in, the weeds were higher than the windows and our first task was to clean the debris and trash out of the house and cut the high growth in the yard. The place never really became fit for human habitation and was so close to the railway tracks that the trains at night sounded as if they were coming through the side of the building. The house was infested with rats and the yard with snakes. The job my father expected did not materialize and the help we received from congregations which he was invited to visit on the weekends was not sufficient to sustain us.

Once again, we took up our trek, seeking for a solution to the rugged problem of life. This time we settled in Chillicothe, Missouri. There are two things which stand out in my mind. One is the gathering of coal which fell off railroad cars as they swayed along the tracks. Our success meant the difference between being cold or warm in the old rattletrap house. We did not have the money for fuel. Another, is the fact that the congregation, which was in trouble when we went, divided soon afterwards. A little group of us met in an old upstairs room above a store. Division brought sadness and disillusionment. A number of people simply dropped out.

1. Early Years

Meetin' House Religion

Contents

It has long been a thesis of mine that those who are not formally educated tend to preserve the wisdom gained by experience in easily-remembered proverbs. When any situation arises which demands comment, one of these capsules can be prescribed, and it will quickly put life into proper perspective. Our mother, having grown up in an immigrant colony, had a "saying" for every behavioral problem. She even made us clean up food on our plates by quoting, "Willful waste makes woeful want."

Sometimes her proverbs were contradictory, a fact which did not trouble her in the least. If someone we knew moved around from pillar to post and did not hold a job she was ready with "A rolling stone gathers no moss." But if another was too content to toil away interminably at the same ill-paying task she nailed him with, "A setting hen grows no feathers." In spite of our poverty and the difficulty of survival she maintained our morale and boosted her own hope by constant repetition of the old cliche, "It's a long road that has no turn in it." We had been on the road of life going from bad to worse long enough. So a slight bend in the road came in sight.

Our father, who had tried everything that was honest to eke out a living in Chillicothe, including becoming a "Watkin's man," selling household products, had meanwhile been helping

rural and village congregations everywhere within range. He received a letter from Pike County, Illinois, asking him to come and conduct a couple of brief meetings and, imbued with a desire to preach the gospel, he went, after arranging with a good storekeeper to supply our needs "on time." We received enthusiastic letters from him. The meetings were going well. He was baptizing a number of people. He wanted us to see the area.

That is how we happened to move into the rural area in Illinois, called Old Pearl, where I was privileged to attend a one-room country school for a few months. It must have been a growing settlement at one time, but when the railroad went through almost three miles away, a new Pearl sprang up on the Illinois River, and the old one was stopped "dead in its tracks." We bought a ten acre orchard and our place was in full view of the schoolhouse and the "church building." The two of them stood side by side. In every direction, along roads which were dusty in dry weather and "shoemouth deep" in rainy weather, stretched larger farms. The pastures were watered by gently-flowing creeks and the timbered portions were the shelters for every kind of native wild animals.

It was evident, from the very outset, that we were "back home" again. The friendly, helpful and humble people were our kind of folk. In an earlier day, this broad sweep of prairie leading toward the steep bluffs which stood like a frowning fortress above the Illinois River bottom-land, had been inhabited by sturdy Anglo-Saxons with names like Willard, Jackson, Johnson and Calvin, and others betokening the trades of original ancestors, such as Miller, Wheeler, Draper and Waggoner. Generally hard-working, frugal and neighborly they received us with open arms. At the very outset, they had a homemade ice cream party for us to which they brought not only well-filled freezers, but all kinds of food staples— sugar, flour, home-canned vegetables and fruits, smokehouse hams and bacon. We had never seen such a supply of food, and when they all left our mother cried unashamedly, while the rest of us stood

and looked at the huge stockpile while still shivering from the ice cream with which they had regaled us.

Every school district in the area had a "Church of Christ." A few congregations met in the local schoolhouse, but most of them had erected plain structures in which to meet. Older preachers like "Uncle Henry Maynard" and "Uncle George Williams" had taken the plea that one could be a "Christian only" into the region round about, until there was a group of saints meeting about every three to five miles in every direction. Many of the people did not know there was any other kind of "a church." They supposed that all who were not unbelievers "spoke where the Bible spoke and remained silent where the Bible was silent." There was no apparent rivalry. When one congregation had a "big meeting" all attended it and the house was filled to overflowing, many of the men having to remain out in the yard and listen to the message through the open windows.

No congregation had a "hired preacher." The term "local minister" was not in their vocabulary. The "one-man imported pastor system" was regarded as an innovation. It was a departure from the simplicity of the faith. It was not according to the ancient order. Each congregation had elders and no one was appointed to this function who was not "apt to teach." These men were not ambitious for power or glory. They shared the public edification with any man who was gifted at all. Each Lord's day, as Sunday was invariably designated, after the study of the lesson, one of the elders would say, "Is there any brother who has a word of exhortation? If so, an opportunity will now be given for it." Sometimes three men would speak briefly in turn. If a visiting brother was present he was specifically invited to speak. If no one arose to speak one of the elders was prepared to teach and admonish.

As I look back upon those days there comes to my mind the mental image of toil-worn men sitting on the front porch at dusk, reading the sacred volume. I recall being in homes on cold

wintry days where men who had spent hours feeding and doing the chores, now sat down close to the heating-stove to study the Bible, until the warmth stole over the bodies and lulled them to sleep while the book slid gently to the floor. Since I had been completely through the Bible at least twice, when some remote point was "brought up in the meeting" the teacher might refer it to me. Frequently I knew the answer. This did two things. It drew the commendation of the older folk and strengthened the resolution of the males who were my age to beat me up, the age-old and effective recourse of country boys to a "smart city kid."

A passage from the Roman letter keeps coming to my mind. "I myself am satisfied about you, my brethren, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able to instruct one another." I think that may describe the way we were. No one threw his weight around. The brethren were tolerant of one another. When old "Pappy Davis" decided it was not "scriptural" to stand for prayer, no one was upset if he kneeled while we stood. When he was called upon to lead in prayer, the one who was presiding asked us all to kneel.

There was a cooperative spirit. The sisters took a month each in preparing the loaf for the Lord's Supper, and shared their recipe for making unleavened bread. We used two glasses to pass the fruit of the vine, and during a protracted meeting when a lot of visitors were present we added two more. Near the close of the service, while a hymn was being sung, everyone marched up and "laid by in store" by putting his money on the white linen cloth on the table. Before returning to their seats they shook hands with everyone on the front seat. There was a lack of pride and affection which contributed to the idea that it was a family reunion of the saints of God.

Because we had moved in the middle of the term I finished the year in the little schoolhouse where eight grades were crowded together in one room. There was a "recitation bench" in front and the teacher called each class to come in turn and

occupy that seat while its members recited whatever lesson was scheduled. By the time one reached the eighth grade he had heard every textbook reviewed eight times. Although I was destined to attend but a few months, that little school, taught by Lee Carter Maynard, made an indelible impression upon my mind.

Two significant things happened soon after we moved into the new community. The first was that my mother began to attend the meetings of the congregation. I am sure she had been lonely, but here she was accepted, and the genuine concern of the other women made her want to be with them. She told us it represented no change upon her part and that she simply went to be with the rest of the family, but she was talking to herself as much as to us.

The second thing was my decision one Sunday to be baptized into Christ. I was sitting in my accustomed place with the other boys of the community. Nothing unusual was occurring. The songs were not more exciting. The short talk by one of the elders was a routine one. But there came to me, out of nowhere a feeling of deep depression and remorse that I had not audibly confessed before men my faith in Jesus. Suddenly I knew that he had not just died for sin, but for *my sins*. There was a tugging at my inward being to enroll in His service. It was as if I were receiving a clear summons to follow His leading.

After the meeting was over I hurried away home. I did not want to talk to anyone. I felt miserable. I could not eat luncheon and as soon as I could steal away I went to one of my favorite spots for meditating, under the shade of one of the apple trees in a remote corner of the orchard. All afternoon I sat there, inwardly presenting the consequences of acceptance or rejection. It was as if two forces inside me were locked in violent struggle. Two voices were calling out of the depths. Finally, I surrendered to the urging of the Spirit, and at once felt an inner peace and quiet I had never before known. It was as if a heavy rock had

been lifted off my being. That night, unaware that I was bare foot and dressed in bib overalls, I confessed to the little group of humble farm-folk that I believed with all my heart that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God.

One week from that time, on a sun-drenched Sunday afternoon, we gathered at the old swimming-hole in the creek which flowed through John Willard's pasture. The cows which were lying in the shade of the sycamore trees continued to chew their cuds placidly, undisturbed by this unusual intrusion. The little group of onlookers who had assembled sang the words "Shall we gather at the river?" One of the elders, a neighbor whom all of us loved, Jesse Jackson, led me into the stream with the silvery minnows darting this way and that, and immersed me into that glorious relationship involving the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

My mother was there, and I suspect her mind went back to the time when she dressed my baby form in the long white christening-dress and carried me so far to have me christened by the Missouri Synod Lutheran clergyman. But she merely wiped away her tears, and hugged my wet body without saying anything. We climbed into the big wagon in which we were to ride back home, and my wet clothing felt good as the sun's rays beat down upon us. But it was the cool, refreshing feeling inside of me which meant the most. What a thrill to be one spirit with the Lord!

1. Early Years

My Days As A Boy Preacher

Contents

My surrender to the claims of Jesus over my life launched me almost at once into a round of new experiences. On the Sunday following my baptism I publicly read the scripture lesson which was a regular feature of our assembly. A week later I led in public prayer. The autumn "protracted meeting" was conducted by J. C. Bunn, an esteemed evangelist who was born in our general region and who was in demand among the congregations. On the final night of his series he announced that I would speak one month from that night. Apparently he had consulted with the elders but the announcement came as a complete surprise to me.

By this time I had graduated from the rural school and was attending classes in town, a distance of some three miles. I was barely twelve years of age. Since I knew of no effective way of getting out of speaking I decided to use the theme "Counting the Cost" and after outlining what I wanted to say I began rehearsing on my walk through the woods and fields each morning and evening as I went to school and returned home. Interest began to grow as word was noised abroad and on the Sunday evening I was to speak the house was completely crowded out and many had to remain outside and listen through the open windows.

When I ascended the platform, dressed in knee trousers, I

was so short my head could hardly be seen above the reading stand by the seated audience. One rural wag told me later the only way he knew I was back there was by seeing my hair moving back and forth above the stand. He said it was standing on end. I was afraid of but one thing, that I might run out of material and have to dismiss the audience prematurely. There was no danger! I spoke almost an hour, and later when one farmer was asked what he thought about my preaching he said, "It is the most exhausting experience I have ever had. You can't sleep worth shucks while he is talking and you don't get home in time to catch up on it before morning."

As soon as I had finished, an elder from the Green Pond congregation came up and asked me if I would speak there the following Sunday, and another from Bee Creek arranged for me to speak there two weeks from that date. Soon I was busy every Sunday of each month, and people came from far and near to see a "boy preacher" with the same curiosity which would have attracted them to a carnival sideshow to see a two-headed calf.

One week my father was conducting a series of meetings in a rural location far out in the bottom area of the snake-infested region close to the Mississippi River. Word was conveyed that the humble farm-folk wanted to close with a basket dinner followed with an afternoon meeting with both my father and myself as speakers. It was the first time my father had heard me make a public address and it was a blessing indeed for me to be thus associated with him, knowing as I did the zeal he had for Christ and the sacrifices he had made for the cause which he loved more than life.

One afternoon when I arrived home from school, I found my mother sitting on the front porch visiting with Sister Schlieper, whose husband was an elder of the congregation at Bee Creek. Anna Schlieper was a remarkable person. Her father, Klaus Martens, a carpenter in Germany, brought his family to America when Anna was five years of age. The

immigrants settled in a region known as Mozier Hollow, in Illinois. Nominally members of the Lutheran Church in Germany, they did not actively identify with any religious group in the new world. In the little colony of people whose roots still reached back to "The Fatherland" Anna married Edward Schlieper and they began their home under extremely modest circumstances.

"Uncle Tom" Roady, a plain country-type preacher came into "the Hollow" to conduct a series of meetings, and because every such gathering was a social event, the Schliepers went. Although the preacher was far from being a "ball of fire" the simple message made an impression upon the shrewd mind of Anna Schlieper and she and her husband were immersed in the nearby stream. The wife immediately began to plunge into the revelation of God, and although her husband was not as interested as herself, she bombarded him with her findings until he became an apt student of the Word. By the time we moved to Illinois the entire Schlieper family was in the faith and pillars in both the community and the little congregation which met in a building occupying a plot of ground carved out of their farm.

I shall always believe it was an act of divine providence which caused us to move to that region of Illinois. No one else on earth was as well adapted to reach my mother as Anna Schlieper. Two days after the latter had read to her from the German Translation of Martin Luther, I was summoned to the classroom of the high school principal, G. B. Garrison, who informed me that my mother was to be baptized at two o'clock that afternoon and I was free to attend if I wished. I walked the more than two miles out the railroad track to the bridge over the creek and turned up the country road to the "baptizing hole." I was alternately weeping and praying as I went. In my childish inexperience I had no vocabulary with which to express my profound gratitude unto God. I still do not.

After my mother had been immersed, and we returned

home so she could change from her wet garments, I wanted to tell her how much I rejoiced inwardly, but all I could get out was a stammering "Mom, I'm glad!" Both of us started crying and continued until it seemed silly to go on, and then we started laughing, almost hysterically. After that we both understood and did not need to talk about it any more. Our family was one in Christ Jesus. When my grandfather heard about it, he revised his will without my mother's knowledge. He never wrote to us again and when his will was read after his death, my mother's name was not even mentioned. She had been a favorite child, loving and obedient, but once she obeyed the call of Jesus it was as if she had never been born. The sectarian spirit crushed out parental affection as it destroys all love and makes those who would kill you think they are doing God a service.

Occasionally I am asked by those who have created institutional handmaidens to suckle, rear and train the children of God, how we made out before men created these special agencies and auxiliary bodies as functional nursemaids. The answer is simple. Each congregation was regarded as a school of Christ and a college of the Bible. All of the soldiers were given the same identical training. All were taught the use of the various portions of the sword. No one was sent as a recruit to an "officer's training school" to come back and wield the weapon and wear the shield for the whole company. Benjamin Franklin had taught the brethren to "teach the whole truth to the whole church and those with leadership ability will rise to the top as cream rises on the milk."

Intensive studies of the Bible were conducted in many congregations during the winter. Brethren within driving distance attended with eagerness. Classes were held morning, afternoon and night. Training was afforded boys and young men in the public presentation of the Word. Stiff tests were given to see if the message was getting through. These studies often lasted for weeks and provided a welcome respite in long winter months. Brethren who were apt to teach were in constant

demand.

In this number was A. M. Morris, whose studies at Hale, Missouri, and Winfield, Kansas, are still mentioned by old-timers. Brother Morris wrote the books *Prophecies Unveiled* **and** *Reason and Revelation***. They were widely read in all religious circles. Once when he was on a train, William Jennings Bryan, the Democratic candidate for president came through the coaches meeting and shaking hands with the passengers. When he learned the identity of Morris he publicly introduced him as the man whose books had taught him more about the Bible than any other volumes he had read. He urged the passengers to secure a copy of** *Reason and Revelation* **and read about it.**

Daniel Sommer, J. C. Bunn, Stephen and Silas Settle, and D. Austen Sommer were all recognized as teachers. The latter, like his father, produced a number of books, among them one called "How to Read the Bible for Pleasure and Profit." It was cleverly done and he used this as a guide in his four-week study which I attended at night the winter after I was baptized. He was not as adept in teaching as some of the others, but one does not criticize the serving when he is starving for the food.

I learned a great deal, as a mere lad, sitting with older farm-folk who marked and underlined the Bibles so they could recall the things they had learned. They were often slow readers and had to point to each word in turn. Sometimes they mistook the meaning of a passage as did the dear old sister who was reading the passage which declares that "Jacob stole away from Laban unawares," and read it with emphasis, "And Jacob stole away from Laban in his underwear." But I doubt there has ever been a substitute quite as effective as the training of the whole community of saints to function by the use of every gift. As Peter put it, "Each one should use whatever spiritual gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms."

As the months went by I was called upon to go farther and farther from home to speak at congregations, some of which I had scarcely heard about. Each Saturday I would walk to town and board the train for some destination where I was scheduled to address the brethren on Saturday night and Sunday morning, returning home again on Sunday evening. Frequently, after taking my ticket, a conductor would come back and question me to see if I was running away from home. On occasion a brother would come to meet me at the railway station and return home without me, telling his wife that no one got off the train but a little boy and he did not see "hide or hair" of anyone who even looked like a preacher.

Our uncle, L. E. Ketcherside, arranged for me to come and speak there each night during the Christmas vacation. I stayed in his home and we talked long and often about the cause we loved. He was a master at relating his experiences and also at personal work. We developed a closeness which was never strained through the years. Several decades later he died of a massive brain hemorrhage as he was going from door to door distributing faith-building material he had printed on his trusty mimeograph the day before. As I spoke words of tribute in his honor at the funeral service my mind drifted back to the wintry nights when the two of us walked through the crunching snow at Centralia.

I recalled that the speaker's stand was so high that I had to stand on a box to see the audience. There were not more than thirty persons present but it was a great meeting because I was with those whom I loved.

2. Marriage and Evangelism

Married and Broke!

Contents

By the time my thirteenth birthday arrived and summer vacation had rolled around I was scheduled for meetings in three states. This meant I would be away from home until school started again. I had already baptized several persons, most of them my age. A number of others who had "come forward" were immersed by elders who were afraid that, because of my size, I might drown them in the process, or vice versa. At least two of the meetings were in tents. This was before the time of amplifiers and loud-speakers so I had to develop my voice range which was not easy for one my age. Meetings were held all seven nights of the week and often three times on Sunday. There was not much time for respite.

It was not all serious business, and years later, older brethren would recount to my embarrassment, how, when I was preaching in a country schoolhouse or other rural setting, I would be out playing leapfrog or marbles with other boys of my age, and they would have to come out and tell me I had better stop and wash up at the pump because it was time for the meeting to begin. Since many of my engagements were in farming communities or small villages, and I stayed in a different home every night, sleeping under all sorts of conditions and eating all kinds of food, I received training which stood me in good stead later as I traveled in other parts of the world.

It would be interesting to me, but boring to you, if I were to recount the meetings in which I engaged for the next two or three years, so I will resist the urge to pursue that course. There are some places which return vividly to mind. Among them is Bonne Terre, Missouri, which took me back to within six miles of my birthplace. Here, where the remnants of the Cantwell congregation were to be found, I stayed in the home of my paternal grandparents while speaking each night to a capacity crowd. Often the building could not contain the listeners. Seventeen persons were immersed, some of whom still live and are active in the work of the Lord. The spiritual enthusiasm in the town was at a high pitch and the saints were blessed.

Another place I especially remember was a rural congregation called Walnut Hill, south of Springfield, Missouri, located near Battlefield, so designated because of the fierce Civil War battle in which the famous General Nathaniel Lyons, of the Union forces, was mortally wounded. It was not historical lore which impressed the place upon my mind, but the fact that the group of saints there purchased for me my first suit with long trousers. When I went in to Springfield with one of the elders, Brother Bussard, he sprang a complete surprise on me by taking me to a clothing store on South Campbell Street where he outfitted me in a suit with a vest. The price was fifteen dollars and there was no sales tax.

Then, with two more years of high school before me, my father decided to move to Topeka, Kansas. An elderly gentleman, Peter Griggs, offered him a contract to manage Mount Auburn Cemetery, and he found the lure of a regular income irresistible. He called me by long distance telephone and I went to Topeka where I met him and exhausted my little bank account by making a down payment on an old house outside the city limits which I thought of as "that tumble-down shack in Athlone." It had no indoor plumbing and was in a state of decrepitude. It was all we could afford. When my mother saw it she said, "Poor people have poor ways," and set about trying to

make it more livable. My father had great plans for developing it when we got on our feet. We never got there and the "dream castle" never emerged. He spent every spare minute preaching and settling squabbles at places which did not reimburse him enough to pay the grocery bill.

When I started to Highland Park High School I was in a different world than I had been in while attending the little two-teacher high school in Pearl, Illinois. But there was no speech department and when I took it upon myself to enroll in the National Oratorical Contest I had to do all of the work on the speech myself. In the elimination contest I was obviously at a disadvantage and did not even win an alternate position. First place was captured by George Chumos of Topeka High School, the fluent son of a Greek immigrant. When I learned that he had been coached by Miss Carmi Wolfe, head of the Speech Department, I enrolled in Topeka High School where I had to pay my own tuition.

The following year under the expert tutelage of Miss Wolfe, I captured the city contest, the state contest, the regional contest, and lost out in the one which would have sent me to Washington to compete in the finals, held in the House of Representatives. When I graduated from high school I went to Topeka Business College on a scholarship. I studied banking and accounting and ended up taking a position with the Columbian Title and Trust Company, as a researcher for abstracts. I spent my noon hours poring over the old Indian treaties and government land grants. But after less than six months had passed, the call of the whitened fields became so great, I could not resist. I resigned my position, much against the will of the company officials and returned to traveling as an evangelist.

God was gracious unto me and my efforts were crowned with what "our brotherhood" regarded as success. There were "additions" in every meeting. New congregations were being started and when divisions occurred, as they frequently did, we

were able to consolidate "the faithful ones" who "came out from among them" to preserve the doctrine in its purity.

I was nineteen years old when I went back to Flat River, Missouri, for what turned out to be one of the most eventful meetings of my life. Every evening when the bell sent its mellow tones out across this mining town the people began to surge toward the building. It was literally "standing room only" every night. I stayed with an uncle in Bonne Terre, about seven miles away but I was in Flat River daily, visiting the members and doing personal work. My song leader was Arvel Watts, one of the best I had ever known, but the greatest thing going for him, as I soon discovered, was that he was the older brother of Nellie Watts. I had always liked girls, and even at my tender age had imagined I was in love with a number of them. But that was before I saw Nell, a raven-haired brown-eyed beauty, whose simple charm swept me off my feet and left my mind reeling.

J. W. Watts, whose first initials stood for John Wesley, was reared in a home of "shouting Methodists," as was his wife. But when he heard Daniel Sommer preach he was baptized into Christ at once and was already a member at Flat River when my father obeyed the gospel. By the time I grew up and returned to Flat River for the meeting, he and Arvel each owned a store, and Nell was working as a clerk in her father's place of business. There were six children in the Watts family, as there were in my own father's family, and the home was one of genuine Christian commitment, under the direction of a stern but just father whose word was law, and who tolerated no "monkey business."

It was Nell's mother, I think, who first suspicioned that I was ending up at the store every day just before noon, not so much because I was interested in food, but to see her daughter. When she mentioned her feelings to Nell's father he said it was silly, and that in spite of the fact I wasn't yet dry behind the ears, I had too much sense to marry at my age. Meanwhile I could see no indication that I was making any headway, and the

meeting was fast drawing to a conclusion. One of Nell's sisters did not help my state of depression by informing me that Nell had long ago announced that she would never marry a preacher or a traveling salesman.

It was on the final afternoon of the meeting that Nell's older sister and her fiance suggested that they would take me back to Bonne Terre after the meeting. He was the local Oldsmobile dealer and drove a new coupe with a rumble seat. As Nell and I rode along in it I extracted from her a promise that she would write to me if I wrote to her. She said she would answer any letters she received. That's where she made her mistake.

I wrote every day. Some days I wrote twice. Four more months went by and I found a few days in which I would not be preaching. I arranged a date in advance and during those few days we agreed that we would marry. I do not think I ever made a formal proposal. We simply seemed to take it for granted that we would marry. I went on my way rejoicing but now sent every cent I could spare to Nell who placed it in a special account so that we could purchase a car and later our furniture. A few months later I returned so we could make final arrangements. I had been writing every day and printing a little sixteen page quarterly dedicated just to her, but now the days seemed to creep by.

Finally, the time came to get the license and make the final preparations, and on Sunday afternoon, we were married in the living-room of the Watts' home, with my uncle, L. E. Ketcherside, officiating. It was a very simple ceremony, lasting but a few minutes. There were no special decorations. We left immediately enroute to Topeka, Kansas, where my folks lived. On the way we stopped overnight at Nevada, Missouri, where we resolved to make our home.

After a few days in Topeka, we started for California,

where I was scheduled for three meetings. There were no motels and most of the roads were unpaved. We expected to camp along the way and had a tent and all of the equipment with us. But the second night out, at North Platte, Nebraska, I became violently ill and developed a high fever. The next morning I drove as far as the little town of Sutherland, a distance of twenty miles, and it became apparent I could go no farther. We drove down the dusty main street until we saw the sign on a dingy little building, "Frank Shambaugh, M.D., Physician and Surgeon." Dr. Shambaugh examined me and diagnosed my condition as appendicitis. He suggested that we get a room in the little unprepossessing two-story hotel, and he would pack me in ice in the hope that the inflammation would subside and I could return home for surgery.

After seven days in the little hotel it was obvious there was no improvement and something would have to be done at once. In a private home converted into a three-room hospital I underwent surgery on Sunday afternoon. I was frightfully nauseated from the ether. Each morning Nell came to remain with me through the day. Each morning she went back to the hotel room by herself. When I became able to drive we took a test run out through the country and the next day started for Topeka. We were financially broke. Our last cent was gone. We were in debt and I was too weak to work. But we were both alive and we were together.

A short time later we rented our first place, a little three-room meagerly furnished apartment in an old house at Nevada, Missouri. Here the members took us to their hearts and we found real joy in sharing our lives together. The congregation continued their plan of mutual ministry, for they had never hired a preacher. The elders and other brethren of ability edified the saints. I simply took my turn with them, but it was not necessary that I be present on Sunday. I was free to go out and take the message to others.

2. Marriage and Evangelism

And Baby Makes Three

Contents

I have been casting about for the right word to describe our relationship with the community centered around Nevada, and I have decided upon the term "idyllic." When you look it up in your dictionary you will see at once why I selected it. If you will permit me to backtrack a little, I should like to tell you we moved there on November 7, 1928. After we had remained at my father's home until I recovered strength following my surgery, we returned to Nell's home, so she could vote for a president the first time. The election was on November 6.

The choice was not an agonizing one. She voted for Herbert Hoover. His opponent was Al Smith, four times governor of New York. As if that were not enough to condemn him in the eyes of midwesterners he was also a Catholic and a "wet" during the days of prohibition. Moreover, he wore a brown derby, and the thought of someone in the White House with that kind of hat seemed ridiculous. So Nell voted for Hoover. I was not quite old enough to vote. The Republicans campaigned on their record of increasing prosperity under the Harding and Coolidge administrations. They promised to end poverty and make possible "a chicken in every pot, a car in every garage." None of us realized we were facing a depression in which every car would go to pot and most of us would be raising chickens in the garage.

Nevada is the county seat of Vernon county, Missouri. We moved there because it was about halfway between our parental homes. When we did the rural flavor was still quite pronounced. Both the Missouri Pacific and the Missouri-Kansas-Texas railways ran trains though the town so that it was linked with every part of the United States by connecting lines in great industrial centers. But Nevada was still a country town. Saturday was the big day of the week. Farmers with produce to sell parked around the courthouse square and dispensed their wares from the backs of their vehicles. There were still hitching racks for those who drove teams.

Sidewalks were crowded with people who visited all day, going home only in time to do the chores in the evening. Harmless gossip flowed freely and tidbits of news were exchanged. When two persons met the general form of greeting was, "Have you heard?" and the newcomer was given the latest news. It was a day when one could speak on the courthouse lawn and be assured of a crowd eager for something to provide a diversion from whittling and spitting tobacco juice at a mark on the ground.

The small congregation meeting in the plain little white frame structure on North Main Street was composed primarily of farmers with a sprinkling of railroad employees. It was under the care of three elders— Brethren Kryselmier, Billings and Journey. The first was a retired "hog-head" as everyone called a railroad engineer, the second was a dairyman, and the third a farmer. They did not "hire" me to move to the town to work with the church. They were surprised when I told them I was coming to their town, a decision I reached while holding a meeting for the congregation the year before. I suspected at the time they were glad to hear it, but they did not make a great fuss over the announcement.

No congregation among us had "a minister." I was regarded as an evangelist. There was a clear understanding that

the primary task of an evangelist was to proclaim the good tidings to those who had never obeyed the gospel. When a congregation was planted, the evangelist remained to train and prepare his converts until men with the qualifications for bishops arose among them. We were imbued with the idea enunciated by Benjamin Franklin, the gospel preacher, who said, "Feed the whole church the whole word, and leadership will rise among the members as cream rises upon the milk." When men exhibited the qualifications required of bishops they were elected by the multitude of the saints and ordained by the evangelist.

At this juncture his work was terminated as he commended the congregation and the elders "to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." The evangelist was then ready to move on or to band together another group in the locality and duplicate the process. The idea of hiring out to preach the gospel to a congregation of saints with bishops at so much per week, no more entered our minds than it did those of the believers in the days of the apostles. Such terms as hiring or firing preachers, contracts, vacation stipulations, were as foreign to our spiritual vocabulary as they were to the new covenant scriptures.

When an evangelist was a member of a local body of disciples, he held no office or priority in that congregation. As a member he took his turn in edifying and exhorting, but a great deal of the time he was laboring with new or weak places which needed his talents and advice. It seemed silly to concentrate the strongest talent in a place which needed it least. In war the greatest firepower is directed to the weakest spots. During the first winter I was in Nevada I spoke about once every six weeks. At other times I sat with Nell and listened to the other brethren admonish us. But I was making personal calls in every part of the country. I mapped out areas and visited the farm homes of all who lived within the perimeter. I talked to them about the

Lord and began to hold Bible studies in rural meetinghouses, grange halls and schoolbuildings at night. Frequently I was invited by the schoolteacher to come and speak to the children during the day. I came to know hundreds of people.

In the town I secured permission to speak one day per week to the crew working in the roundhouse of the Missouri Pacific Railway. While they were eating lunch together I spoke to those who were willing to come. It soon became so much a part of their life that I broke up the card games on the day I was there. I spoke frequently at the chapel for the mental patients in the State Hospital north of town. Soon I was becoming a kind of regular fixture at the noon luncheon clubs of the Rotarians, Kiwanians and Lions. When a speaker cancelled out on them they called me. The railroad men elected me chaplain of the combined Boosters Clubs of the Joplin and White River Divisions of the Missouri Pacific.

As a result of these contacts I was immersing men and women in ponds, lakes, rivers, and even stock tanks in feedlots. So many railroaders became Christians that on Sunday "the caller" could come and hand in a list of workmen needed on an emergency train and we could make up his crew of engineers, firemen, brakemen and conductors, from the congregation. We even had the Railway Express representatives. I was thrilled with life, filled with zest, and ready to believe that we could take the world for Christ.

Then, during the sixth month of our marriage, Nell discovered she was pregnant. I was still soaring on imaginary wings at the thought of being a husband, and now a new dimension was to be added. I would be a father. It was all kind of mind-boggling to realize that at my age I was going to be entrusted with rearing a future president of the United States. I was overwhelmed with the thought that we would have a baby of our very own. As the weeks passed into months and Nell's body began to swell with the new life within, she became as beautiful

to me as she appeared grotesque and ungainly to herself. I shall never forget the night I placed my hand against her abdomen and felt the fetal heartbeat of our joint production.

We knew we could not continue another winter in an apartment so cold that ice froze at night in the bucket of water in the kitchen. And then, just as if an unseen hand was guiding our destiny, a small five-room house became vacant directly across the street from the meetinghouse. We rented it and moved in. There was nothing good or fancy about it. Our furniture was not adequate for it, but this did not affect us. The folk in the congregation were good to us and the baby shower provided the needs of one about whom we had dreamed but had not yet seen.

There was no hospital in the city so we made arrangements for the delivery at home, following instructions of the dignified and elderly Dr. Love, who seemed to be altogether too calm for such a momentous task. It was early in the morning of September 18, 1929, when Nell prodded me awake to tell me that the hour was approaching. I could not find the light switch in the dark and fell over everything in two rooms trying to get to the telephone. When I finally got the doctor awake to give him the news of the century, he told me he would get dressed and be along as soon as he fixed himself a cup of coffee. I could not understand how anyone could stop to drink a cup of coffee while facing the most momentous event of his whole career. I was walking the floor, trying to remember what I had read in doctor books about delivering babies when he knocked on the door.

He was as much a master of delivering young husbands of their fears as he was in delivering young wives of their babies. He told me he would need some things done and issued some orders for me to prepare this and that. While I was bustling about doing it he sat down in our only comfortable chair and took a nap. It was only after it was all over and he had gone that I realized he had asked me to do things which he never referred

to or asked about again.

We had arranged for our aged sister in Christ, Mrs. Richard F. Edwards, to come and help us with the baby. She was a precious and gentle soul who had borne a number of children of her own, and had assisted with the birth of many more. She was present soon after the doctor arrived, and proceeding efficiently in spite of my getting in her way. She was helping Dr. Love in the actual delivery when, all of a sudden, he said, "Well, well, it's a fine big boy." It was, too, because the scales registered nine-and-a-half pounds.

Nell seemed to take it fine, but I was completely worn out from the ordeal. I shall never forget the sense of well-being which was mine when they laid Gerald Bernard in my arms for the first time. Nell selected the name, choosing it because we could not think of anyone in either of our families who ever bore such a name. I do not recall that anyone has ever called him Gerald since that morning. Somehow he became tagged with "Jerry" and that is what it has been ever since. A completely new phase of life had begun for us. I found myself humming a snatch of the song made famous by "Little Jack Little" a famous radio performer of the time, " . . . the baby makes three, we're happy in my blue heaven."

When I had recovered sufficiently to walk to town I went to the office of Dr. Love and told him I had come to pay my bill. He got out his account book and said, "Let me see. I examined your wife four times here in the office during her pregnancy, and then came to the house and delivered the baby, and have made two trips back since to check on things. I'm afraid I shall have to charge you thirty dollars in all, but if you think that is too much I can take the baby in on it."

I have known a lot of experiences in life. Some of them have been tragic. Others were joyful. But for sheer pleasure mingled with constant concern there is nothing equal to rearing

a baby. Every degree of fever arouses grave apprehension. Every little cry at night is heard and brings you from a snug bed to tramp across a cold linoleum. In reality, babies are tyrants. They are utterly and wholly selfish. It is better to realize this and be truthful about it. They scream until they grow livid in the face and quickly change to gurgles of contentment as soon as you pick them up and start talking softly in the special vernacular of baby-talk which they love. If you do not pick one of them up soon enough he shifts into the tactic of holding his breath. You become frantic. The fact is that no baby ever died from holding his breath. He always catches it just in time to go on living and employ the same ruse next time.

Babies belch in your face and burp down your back just when you are preparing to leave for a special meeting and haven't time to change suits, if you are fortunate enough to have another one. You arrive smelling like the custodian in the sour cream division of the local dairy. Babies sleep all morning and arouse only to mess up their diapers just when you have poured the coffee and sat down to luncheon. The timing of a baby is uncanny. He can be trusted implicitly to disrupt any plan and wreak havoc on any schedule. And he is worth every minute of it!

His first attempt at crawling, the first time he yanks the table cloth off and sits amidst the wreckage gaily flailing away at it and scattering gravy with both hands, the first stumbling step, the first bumbling word, all of these are mileposts in a career, the topic of telephone calls with which to bore patient listeners, the subject of letters with which to thrill the hearts of distant grandparents. Regardless of one's educational attainments, he will learn more about life by living with a baby than by sitting in ivy-covered towers of scholasticism listening to bearded professors.

But the world has to go on even if you have a baby. No moratorium is declared on the making of history while you play

with your offspring. Six days after Jerry was born Lieutenant Jimmie Doolittle made the first all-instrument plane flight. A new era was ushered in. One month later the stock market crashed. Millions of shares were dumped. Billions of dollars were lost. On October 29 panic selling increased. The ticker tape was almost three hours behind. Thousands of investors saw their fortunes completely wiped out. Some of them jumped from office windows to shatter their bodies on the concrete far below. Men who were wealthy a few days before blew their brains out rather than face life as paupers. Fear and foreboding gripped the country.

Men began to speak of national bankruptcy. It was as if some evil genius had suddenly taken control. The feeling of ominous threat was heightened when a strange fire broke out in the Executive Office building in Washington, D.C., on Christmas Eve. We were tottering on the brink of "The Great Depression."

2. Marriage and Evangelism

Ford Country

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This year of 1930 will be long remembered by those who are old enough to remember it. It was a time of disaster. A great drought lay like a pall over the Ohio and Mississippi River areas. Food resources were depleted, and unemployment and disease took a frightful toll. The census taken during the year determined that a population of 123,202,624 occupied the then forty-eight states, and by autumn President Hoover reluctantly had to admit there were 4,500,000 unemployed. Within a year the amount doubled.

On December 11, the largest bank failure in the United States occurred when the Bank of the United States closed down in New York City, leaving almost a half million depositors stranded. A few days later The Chelsea Bank and Trust Company failed to open the doors of its six outlets and in rapid succession twenty-eight banks in the south and midwest went under. In the next twelve months there were 2,294 bank closings.

To add to the nation's woes in 1930, great fires broke out in various places. One such holocaust at the Ohio State Prison in Columbus resulted in the death of 318 convicts. The state capitol of Bismarck, North Dakota, went up in flames and the loss was estimated to exceed a million dollars. In spite of all this, those who lived the simple life in rural areas seemed to suffer least. Always cooperative and willing to share, they accepted the

situation with a cheerful calm which belied the fright stories in the newspapers. The little congregation at Nevada continued to grow in members added, as well as in grace and knowledge of the truth. As one brother said, "You don't notice a depression if you've never known anything with which to contrast it."

When our baby was about six months old we began a tour which enabled me to conduct meetings previously arranged in four states. He proved to be a good traveler, sleeping much of the way, lulled into slumber by the motion of the automobile. At Topeka, Kansas, we stayed with my folk and during the meeting each night the principal question was who would get to hold the baby. This was the age of "protracted meetings" in Churches of Christ. They were called that in order to distinguish them from "revivals." This was a sectarian term which no self-respecting preacher among us would use. The meeting in Topeka drew capacity crowds, a not too difficult thing because of the limited seating space.

After some tearful farewells, we went next to Marshalltown, Iowa, where I had lived briefly as a boy. Once again we were blessed with good audiences although our cause had never particularly prospered in the area. It was a pleasure to see once more a number of those whom we met when we moved to the area from the little Ozark mining town years before.

The next stop was at River Rouge, the home of the great Ford automobile plant in the Detroit, Michigan area. Already Henry Ford was a legendary character, although he would live for seventeen more years. In 1893, after spending all of his leisure time in experimentation, he built his first automobile in a carriage shed. In 1903 he founded the Ford Motor Company. During the year of my birth he began production of the "Model T." It was so popular it became the butt of jokes by stage comedians and everyone passed along the latest one accompanied by loud guffaws.

Someone in a crowd would say, "There was this preacher who drove a Model T, and got stuck in the mud on his way to church. He pried it out with a rail from a nearby fence, but when he got up to preach, mad and muddy, he began by saying, 'Anyone who drives a Model T, will probably go to hell.' In the back of the house a man stood up and said, 'Amen!' The preacher said, 'How come you said Amen when I predicted anyone who drives a Ford will go to hell?' The man replied, 'Because if she gets you there, she will bring you back.' " Fords were always spoken of in the feminine gender. It was rumored that this was because they were so difficult to get started. Some said it was because you had to pet them to keep them working. They were familiarly called "Tin Lizzies."

In 1927, the "Model T" was discontinued and replaced by the "Model A." By the time it was produced, Ford had turned out fifteen million cars, all the same color. His motto was, "Select any color you want, provided it is black." We went to Detroit because originally the congregation of River Rouge was primarily composed of people from Flat River and the rest of the Missouri Lead Belt. In 1914, Ford raised the wages of assembly line workers from $2.50 to $5.00 per day. The general consensus of opinions was that he had gone crazy and would ruin the country, since no man alive was worth $5.00 per day. People flocked to Detroit from every section of the country. Congregations were depleted elsewhere, while those who went to work for Ford formed congregations of folk "down home" to relieve their loneliness in a strange environment composed of different ethnic groups.

We stayed with Charles and Leray Stewart, because Leray and her sister Opal were part of the group of young people at Flat River with which Nell had been associated. It was a great time to be alive and we became endeared to this generous young Christian couple who took us in. As I write this, they are still living near Ludington, Michigan, where Charles has been an elder for many years at the second oldest congregation in

Michigan, in a rural setting nestled amidst the great cherry orchards which make that section famous.

The River Rouge meetinghouse was filled every night. There were probably as many who came to see Nell as to hear me. Homesickness for southern Missouri was written upon many faces. Everyone was asking about relatives. It was like "old home week." One night when the place was so crowded that chairs filled the aisles, the Bruce family came over from Windsor, Ontario, just across the Detroit River in Canada. Adam and Peggy Bruce had immigrated from the Slamannan District, a colliery region in Scotland made famous through the preaching of the gospel by James Anderson. With them was a younger brother of Adam, George Bruce, who had just arrived from Scotland and who spoke with a brogue so thick you could "slice it with a knife."

They insisted that Nell and I come and spend the day with them as they had an urgent matter which they wanted to discuss. We settled upon a day and drove across the beautiful new Ambassador Bridge, which spanned the Detroit River. It had been open but a few months, the ribbon having been cut on November 11, 1929. It was 1850 feet long and 47 feet wide and had cost $20,000,000. We had never seen anything like it. In Windsor, which gave us the feeling of being "strangers in a strange land" we had difficulty in finding the hospitable home of the Bruces.

Although more than forty-six years have passed as I write this, I can still remember our luncheon, as if it were yesterday. Peggy Bruce was an excellent cook and she had prepared a Scotch meat pie. No one can bake such a pie as those from "the land of the thistle" and it was delicious. We topped it off with cantaloupe a la mode, and since we had never seen this combination before it was a gustatory delight.

As soon as we had finished eating, Adam and George

Bruce and I went out on the front porch and sat down to talk about the cause we loved. It was not always easy to unravel their Scots dialect, but my ears became more accustomed to it as we conversed. I learned about the congregations in the Slamannan District which lies between Edinburgh and Glasgow. They told of the drift of city churches into new ways and new thought patterns which were too liberal for many of the brethren. I learned about Walter Crosthwaite who resisted the inroads of modernism and called for the brethren to stand for the old paths. Certain congregations had declared themselves as opposed to any further erosion of the faith. They had come to be known as "the Old Paths brethren." There was a fairly well drawn line between themselves and congregations affiliated with the British Association of Churches of Christ.

It was the feeling of the Bruces that I should visit Scotland and help to strengthen the brethren. They felt that my position on "mutual edification" as opposed to the congregational importation of a preacher to act as a "one-man pastor" at a stipulated fee would establish a rapport with the brethren in Great Britain where the practice of "mutual ministry" was regarded as the scriptural way. I think my age may have had something to do with the proposal. They undoubtedly felt that one who was young would be able to adjust and adapt to the congregations in "Auld Scotia." George Bruce declared he had never heard anyone preach with the power I manifested. I had just passed my twenty-second birthday.

We drove back to Detroit to the little frame house of the Stewarts with its three large windows in the living room and its lattice-work concealing the area under the front porch (our way of identifying the place) and as we rode along we talked about George Bruce's intention of putting the wheels in motion in his native land. He did as he promised but none of us knew that before our plans could be carried out the Second World War would burst upon the world and we would sail upon the *Queen Elizabeth* on her first trip as a passenger-carrying vessel after

having been used to transport troops, some of whom would never return. I would be thirty-nine years old, and Jerry, now nestled in his mother's arms would be eighteen years of age.

We can never assess, at the time, the purpose of God which brings about what appears to be a chance meeting. But as I look back upon it, I realize that had I not met George Bruce during the few weeks of his sojourn with his brother, I would never have gone to Scotland, England, or North Ireland. If I had never gone I would not be writing this account at all. I would have continued to be a narrow factional leader, debating my brethren and arrogantly defending division among the saints as the only means of achieving doctrinal purity. My life would have been a journey of frustration instead of a pilgrimage of joy.

The meeting at River Rouge closed on an exultant note, the house jammed with listeners. We drove from Detroit to Flat River, Missouri, where my next meeting was scheduled. On the way we learned that Jack Sharkey had lost his heavyweight championship to the German, Max Schmeling, by fouling him in the fourth round. When the pictures of the fight were given a re-run the year following it was found there had been no foul. But it was too late!

The meeting at Flat River began on a happy note. The building in which my father had first heard the gospel and stepped forward to pledge his allegiance to Christ was filled from the first meeting. Nell's brother Arvel was the song leader. He was one of the best with whom I have ever worked. Enthusiasm grew with every session and actually turned into spiritual excitement. Every evening people could be seen walking in small groups toward the meetinghouse, converging upon it from all directions. Sometimes it was almost filled before the first bell was rung thirty minutes prior to the time scheduled to begin. When the final bell was tolled to indicate the service was starting the space inside was all taken and people were outside looking in through the open windows and door.

A number were baptized into Christ and some of them were my kinsmen after the flesh. The interest was heightened by the fact we had just come from Detroit to which the "economic exodus" had taken so many from the Lead Belt. Now their loved ones "down home" swarmed around us wanting to know if we had seen this one or that one. The meeting was greatly aided by the presence of saints from Bonne Terre where I had conducted such a successful effort while still a "boy preacher." Among the elders from Bonne Terre were Henry and Cornelius Mabery, pioneers of the faith in the area around Mine La Motte before moving to Bonne Terre. Always active in the service of the Master, they grounded their families in the faith until now a fourth generation is carrying the banner which they unfurled among the ranks of unbelievers.

Before we returned to Nevada I conducted a series of meetings for the little band meeting at Crystal City, Missouri. My uncle, L. E. Ketcherside, had done personal work, going from door-to-door in Crystal City and the twin-city of Festus, until he succeeded in banding together a little group to "keep house for the Lord." It was not an easy task. Crystal City was named after the huge glass factory, located there because of the abundance of raw material used in the manufacture of plate glass. The work had attracted many immigrants from Southern Europe who were willing to work in the heat cast off by the huge furnaces. Many of the older ones were members of the Roman Catholic or Orthodox Churches and could hardly understand English when they were sober, which was not often.

Festus was originally a settlement known for its saloons and the prostitution which flourished in conjunction with its liquor dispensaries. The town was called "Tanglefoot" because of the unsteady gait of its citizens when full of cheap booze. As a better element moved in it was thought that such a name would only perpetuate the disreputable character of the place. The people met together to select a new name under which they could be incorporated, and it was unanimously decided they

would have a man open the Bible and the first proper name which caught his eye would become the official designation. The book fell open to Acts 25:1, "Now when *Festus* was come into the province . . . " It is a good thing it did not flip open to Isaiah 8:1, or Tanglefoot would have become Maher-shalal-hash-baz. With its zip code it would have been hard to get on an envelope.

In spite of the hardships which he faced, and which never really discouraged or daunted him, my uncle kept on until he had a congregation meeting. He taught them until they were able to take care of themselves. None of them were educated but they had a zeal for the Word, imbued by their mentor. Charles Simms became a leader and a preacher of the Truth, and other humble brethren could speak effectively to the edification of the saints. I held my meeting in a house erected by my uncle on the rear of the lot owned by one of his sisters, for he could not only plant a congregation, he could also do carpentry work as few others I have seen. When the meeting was over we drove back to Nevada after an absence of more than three months.

2. Marriage and Evangelism

The Glory of Mutton Hollow

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Upon our return after more than three months of absence we found the congregation of saints at Nevada in an excellent state. Under the guidance of the bishops, and with the cooperation of the other brethren, the morale was high and the size of the audiences remained at such an excellent level there was serious talk of erecting a new meetinghouse. In every congregation of that day, almost fifty years ago, especially those with a rural constituency, there were always brethren who had scruples and qualms about certain things. However, at Nevada, the others did not try to press an opposing view but graciously accommodated themselves so they would not "set at naught a brother" and thus peace was maintained.

It was decided to bring a luncheon one Sunday and spread tables in the rear of the meetinghouse at noon so all could eat together and be present for an afternoon session in which to discuss the subject of erecting a new house. One brother objected on the ground that his conscience would not allow him to eat in "the Lord's house" or in a place secured with "the Lord's money." No one argued with him about the fact the Lord's house consisted of living stones and not of concrete and boards. In deference to his conscience they rented a hall for the meal and everyone was happy. Two years later, the weak brother had become strong enough to outgrow his scruple on the matter and we could eat together in the basement without

objection.

The word for scruple is from the Latin *scrupulus*, and refers to "a little pebble in the shoe." Such a foreign object pains no one but the wearer of the shoe and those who do not feel the twinge must slow down until the weak brother can walk with them. Eventually, he may recognize that the pebble is not an essential part of the shoe and remove it to his comfort and the quickened pace of himself and others. The fact that we walk in the Spirit does not mean we all have the same gait. We should neither drive our brothers away nor run off from them. It is the stronger who must slow down for the weak cannot walk any faster until they also become strong.

It was decided we would wreck the old meetinghouse and salvage any material possible and erect the new one ourselves, since we had several brethren who could oversee the construction. The sisters would take turns providing food for the workers at noon. There was a sufficiently large crew the day we started so that we wrecked the old building and stacked the material in one day. When we began the new one, several men from the community with carpentry skills volunteered their labor. Some of them were immersed into Christ before the new structure was completed.

Only one incident marred the proceeding. When the framework was up some of the brethren sitting around eating their luncheon suggested we should take out insurance upon it to cover the cost of construction in case of wind, fire or other damage. One brother hooted at the idea and protested emphatically. He declared that it was the Lord's work and the Lord would protect it. He insisted that nothing adverse would happen either to the structure or to anyone working on it, and to take out insurance would be to show a lack of faith in God. He said, "It would be a shame to insure the Lord's property with unbelievers." Three days later he fell off of a scaffold and broke his arm. We took him to an "unbelieving doctor" to set the

bones.

Although the new auditorium seated more than twice as many as the former structure it was filled to capacity the very first Sunday night. It had been so long since a religious group had outgrown their structure that people flocked in to see what was happening. In spite of our narrowness and provincialism, or perhaps because of it, the number of the disciples grew.

One of my favorite areas in "God's vineyard" was the Missouri Ozarks in the region around Springfield and south to the Arkansas line. I held my first meeting in "the Queen City of the Ozarks" when I was a mere lad. It was in a tent on North National Boulevard. After thus being introduced to the region I began to conduct meetings in rural areas off the beaten track. At Walnut Hill the community gave us an excellent hearing and I liked the place because after the evening services we could turn the dogs loose in the timber along the James River and go coon hunting the rest of the night. Here I also got my first taste of fox hunting.

It was during one of my visits to Springfield that brethren from Nixa, a village some twelve miles south, came to interview me to hold a three week gospel meeting for them. When I began on the third Sunday in September I inaugurated a custom that became an annual affair and continued until I had held thirteen meetings, baptizing some two hundred persons. In this little community of about three hundred population there were three or four religious edifices, but the largest was owned by the Church of Christ.

There were three elders— John Bennett, Otis Stine and Jonas Parsons. The first-named had been a rural schoolteacher until retirement. Then he became president of the local bank and general advisor to the community. Since I stayed in his home during many of these meetings I became well acquainted with him and met scores of people who came to him to help them

draw up legal documents and even to write letters for them, since some of them were virtually uneducated and could not "put their thoughts down on paper." The congregation was given prestige by the number of people who studied the Word every day and became proficient in it. A wealth of talent was developed and the congregation grew strong under the guidance of their shepherds.

Every year during our annual meeting I was invited to speak in a number of high schools in the area. I recall that a few of them had makeshift buildings and inadequate classroom facilities, but the concern of the teachers and their dedication to their profession made up for the physical lack. Some high school students were from such poverty-stricken homes they came to school barefoot, bringing lunch pails or sacks containing cold biscuits and sorghum molasses. No days were ever wasted during my three week preaching stints for people arranged meetings and announced them by word of mouth so that I spoke from the porches of country stores or at sawmills and grist mills where native people gathered. The men chewed tobacco and listened with gravity while the women held the children and heard me gladly.

When such meetings were not possible all of us gathered at the home where I was to eat the noonday meal, the women bringing food to spread together, and while there were no formal meetings we sat and talked together well into the afternoon. These were times of simple enjoyment where hearts were cemented together by the love of God and all of us grew in knowledge of the Book as we discussed controverted passages. They were especially profitable to me because of the simple unadorned lives of the people enriched by their constant contact with the divine revelation. Some years I stayed in a different home every night of the three weeks, and often I have blown out the kerosene lamp and tumbled into a bed where the tick was filled with straw or corn shucks, and slept like a log because of physical exhaustion.

The baptizing was done in the beautiful crystal-clear James River. One Sunday afternoon a huge audience gathered on the gravel bar to see twenty-three persons immersed into the relationship involved in the name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Often baptism was performed at night. Cars would be driven to the spot and parked so their lights could be focused on the river. Fish could be seen swimming in the depths. Night birds blended their plaintive calls with the songs of the believers.

Not all such gatherings were as peaceful as this. A year before Nell and I were married, I pitched a tent near Bull Creek and stayed a week by myself. I had been in the "Shepherd of the Hills" country, made famous by Harold Bell Wright, even prior to this, when I was seventeen. This was before the days of the tourist invasion and the only way to travel the region was in an old taxi driven by Mrs. Pearl Spurlock who lived in Branson and made daily trips through the area to accommodate people who stopped over between trains. Most of the roads were merely gravel-strewn trails and the sites featured by Wright were still existent.

Mutton Hollow was an unspoiled wilderness, and one could view its glory from Sammy Lane's Lookout. Preachin' Bill's barn stood to indicate where his log cabin had been and one could walk up "the trail nobody knows how old" to the cabin of Uncle Matt and Aunt Mollie. Uncle Ike, the postmaster at the crossroads, was still living, a bearded patriarch with a Harvard degree who chose to live in solitude but who was anxious enough to visit with me when I met him. The country got into my blood and I decided to go back and camp by myself away from any habitation, and think things out. I selected the right place. Every day I could see the blue haze dropping down on faraway hills and every evening while sitting by the campfire I could hear the eerie hoot of owls and the lonely cry of the whippoorwills.

I saw but two persons in the whole week. A couple of moonshiners came to investigate and assure themselves I was not

a revenue agent searching for their stills. They cautioned me not to go up the hollow across the creek from my tent and ask questions afterward. When they learned I was a preacher they immediately proposed that I speak at the schoolhouse on Friday night since the community "hadn't heard no preachin' since God knowed when." They offered to "norate it around" so I consented.

I didn't realize that such occasions were usually used as an excuse for resumption of feuds although I noticed when the hour drew near for the meeting to begin a lot of the men were talking a little too loudly and the smell of liquid corn pervaded the air. The women and children went inside and so did a few of the men. The rest lounged around outside and their voices could be heard as I announced the first song. Since few knew it and there were no books, I sang but one verse. It was just as I was preparing to read an introductory chapter that someone outside called through an open window to a man inside, using an unmentionable epithet, and daring him to come outside. Without hesitation the one who was challenged climbed up on the seat and dived through the open window, knocking the prop out as he went.

In a matter of seconds the place was in an uproar with everyone pressing toward the door. Outside the drunken frenzied mob was already engaged in a free-swinging melee. It was not necessary to choose up sides. Everyone knew what side he was on when he arrived. Rocks flew freely. The moonlight glinted off the sharp blades of Barlow knives. When two sheriff's deputies arrived, those who could not walk were loaded into cars and taken to Branson to be sewed up.

Later I became good friends with some of the "feuders" who had served terms in the state penitentiary. One in particular was a mere lad when he and his father lay flat on their stomachs at the edge of their woods, resting rifles upon the fence rails to shoot down a neighbor and his two sons working in

the field. They did it to fulfill a "blood oath" laid upon them by the boy's grandfather while he was dying from a gunshot wound. When I met the one-time boy he had "done his time" and had been released. He had married a girl from the hills and they welcomed me to their home. I baptized the whole family as well as some members of the opposite clan. When I was preaching anywhere within forty miles the former "sworn enemies" came together to hear me, bringing as many of their neighbors as they could get on the truck.

The year of 1931 was memorable in our lives for several reasons. For one thing, Nell again became pregnant and suffered a lot from nausea and discomfort during the summer months. We were fortunate that we had been virtually adopted by George and Minnie Kryselmier who not only came to get Jerry often because they adored him, but also had us at their house for meals with great regularity when George was home from a trip on the Missouri Pacific which he served as an engineer. Minnie was a superb cook with an old-fashioned flair and we would visit at the table for a long time unless there was a special radio program on WLS "the Prairie Farmer Station" in Chicago. Since we were too poor to own a radio ourselves, any specially announced program was an excuse to visit the Kryselmiers, who generally honored the arrangement by inviting us to eat with them. We never rejected the invitation.

It was in 1931 we bought our first house. A rather lovely six-room bungalow with a large porch in front became vacant and was offered for sale at $3,100.00 I had never been on a salary and never charged for my services. I simply took what the brethren gave me as I have continued to do through the years. At the time I was averaging about $25.00 per week and we had another baby on the way. But we wanted a place of our own, so we borrowed $300 for the initial payment from Nell's brother Arvel, and began the monthly payments which we continued more than ten years. Nell and I were both troubled about being in debt. To this day we dislike owing anyone anything "but to

love one another" and we sense a real relief when a bill is paid.

It was early in the morning of December 10, 1931, that Nell awakened to tell me she had felt her first pains. At this time I had developed a better "husband image" and proceeded with arrangements with more method and less excitement than when Jerry was born twenty-seven months previously. I summoned Dr. Stanley Love, son of the man who delivered Jerry, and he arrived with greater alacrity than did his father. It was a good thing he did because Nell was in labor but little more than an hour when our baby girl joined the family circle to be given the previously agreed upon name of Sharon Sue. She weighed ten pounds, and Sister Edwards, who again helped us in this critical time, commented upon what a well-formed and happy baby she was right from the start.

Jerry suffered no emotional trauma because a new life had come to share the attention of his parents. We had carefully prepared him in advance until he experienced the same joyful anticipation as ourselves. When Sue was awake he would stand by her little bed and try to get her to smile at him. It was no great task as she was ready to do so with the least personal attention. Life again became a smoothly functioning routine for all of us except that Nell once more had to include the daily bathing of and attention to a chubby little cherubic being.

2. Marriage and Evangelism

The Party and Its Ringleaders

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I sometimes wish I could omit this chapter but to do so would leave a void and create a distorted picture. I will deal with a division and my part in it, although division in the family of God has come to be so abhorrent to me I would like to forget my own unfortunate participation in it. In order to explain what happened I must give you a great deal of background. I do so with the realization it may not make sense to you. If you are patient enough to read it, however, you may be enabled to envision the role of personalities and their political maneuverings in the frightfully-divided Churches of Christ.

Although I did not realize it at the time I was baptized, this historical movement was already fractured into fragments because of the legalistic concept which had captured the minds of its adherents. Divisions do not happen. They are caused. Parties form around men who promote the separation and insist upon the segregation of their adherents. In the movement growing out of the ideal of restoration as enunciated by Thomas and Alexander Campbell, most of the divisions centered around men of prominence. In almost every instance they were editors of journals. They could use their journals as propaganda media and the United States mails as a distribution method. No party could long endure without an editor and a "loyal paper."

Isaac Errett wielded influence through *Christian Standard*.

David Lipscomb edited *Gospel Advocate*. **Austin McGary edited** *Firm Foundation*. **Daniel Sommer edited** *American Christian Review*. **The name of this paper was changed at various times to** *Octographic Review*, *Apostolic Review*, **and back again to** *American Christian Review*. **It was into the segment of "the disciple brotherhood" represented by the** *Apostolic Review* **I was introduced when baptized. At the time I did not know there were others. I supposed, in my childhood idealism, that all Christians were together, united in a common bond of faith, and that wherever you saw a meetinghouse with "Church of Christ" over the door you would find a welcome and a hand of fellowship to cheer you.**

Daniel Sommer was a unique personality. Born of German immigrant parents, on January 11, 1850, he lived for ninety years, and formed a human bridge between the early restoration pioneers and my own time. He was contemporary with Alexander Campbell for sixteen years, and entered Bethany College four years after the death of its founder. A rather slow, but methodical student, he resolved to master the content of divine revelation and to proclaim it "without fear or favor." He viewed the spirit of departure from the original design of the scriptures as a sad and doleful commentary on the influence of pride and ambition among the disciples of Christ and began to raise his voice against the innovations he felt would make impossible the "return to the primitive order of things."

By the time he was forty years of age he was wielding a trenchant pen and a vigorous voice against the employment of "unlawful methods resorted to in order to raise money for religious purposes." He decried such things as bake sales, rummage sales, plays, performances and festivals. He attacked select choirs, instrumental music, missionary societies, and the "One man imported preacher-pastor to take the oversight of the church." It was his opposition to the developing clergy system which crystallized his objection to what he referred to as "so-called Christian colleges." Since David Lipscomb College and

Abilene Christian College were both liberal arts schools, teaching nine-tenths secular subjects and one-tenth Bible, he deplored the designation Christian and coined the term "religio-secular institutions" to describe them.

I have in my possession a yellowed sheet listing exactly a hundred errors of "the new digressives" as he labeled defenders of the colleges to distinguish them from the "old digressives" who endorsed instrumental music and missionary societies. But I think his main objection lay in the charge that the colleges were "preacher factories," taking "beardless youths" whose chief claim to fame was "a gift of gab" and who, after receiving a certain amount of polish and a degree, could hire themselves out by the year to minister to churches for a set fee. He believed such a system would make the churches dependent upon hirelings, and instead of developing a well-trained militia, would so weaken the saints they would have to secure mercenaries to defend themselves against assaults of the enemy.

So formidable was his attack that before 1890 it was decided to "call the hand" of "the digressives" and fling down the gauntlet. The place chosen was the Sand Creek meetinghouse, a rural setting but a few miles from Windsor, Illinois. Here each year huge audiences gathered for a homecoming. A special train ran from Chicago, picking up people enroute. Several thousand gathered for the famous weekend. On August 17, 1889 Daniel Sommer stood up to read a document he had written. He called it "An Address and Declaration" which was a take-off on "The Declaration and Address" of Thomas Campbell penned exactly eighty years before.

It was a protest against "objectionable and unauthorized things taught and practiced in many congregations." It listed four specific "corrupt practices." Instrumental music was not one of them. The thesis closed with these words: "All such that are guilty of teaching, or allowing and practicing the many

innovations and corruptions to which we have referred, and after being admonished, and having had sufficient time for reflection, if they do not turn away from such abominations, that we cannot and will not regard them as brethren."

From now on the die was cast. Although the missionary society had been organized fifty years before, and instrumental music introduced forty years before, for the first time they became an open and formal test of fellowship. Representatives from five congregations affixed their signatures, not realizing that in so doing they were formulating a creed by which brotherhood was to be reckoned. A rash of court suits broke out to secure the property and in many of these Brother Sommer was called to act as a witness and testify against what he called "modern schoolmen."

Hardly had some degree of calm been restored by mutual exclusiveness, when those who deplored the use of the instrument were plunged into another bitter contest. This time the point of contention was "the religio-secular college." The Western Bible and Literary College had been planted at Odessa, Missouri and since there was strong opposition to it by many congregations in the area two debates were arranged between B. F. Rhodes and Daniel Sommer. These were held at Odessa and Hale, Missouri. As a result, J. N. Armstrong, who was president of the school, challenged Brother Sommer to a written examination of the issue.

Twenty essays were presented by each writer in a debate which began on March 15, 1907 and carried over into the year I was born. The written discussion was marked with bitterness and interspersed with accusations and counter-accusations. On page 299, Brother Sommer wrote: "About six years ago I began, with much reluctance, to oppose a certain class of colleges, for they had been projected by men whom I supposed to be my brethren. But I have tested six of them, and have proved them to be reckless of truth, on the college question, and slanderers of

me personally. As a result I cannot regard them as brethren, and do not so designate them except through force of habit in form of expression."

In closing his part of the discussion, Brother Armstrong said: "He is trying to divide a people who are as nearly one in doctrine as it is possible for true, loyal hearts to be; a people who are one on every question of religion save in their misunderstandings of the teachings of Christ. . . . Could he do it, brother Sommer would lead the *Octographic Review* **readers, a small company compared to the great body of disciples that advocate the schools, to reject as Christians this body of disciples, notwithstanding it stands with the** *Octographic Review* **on nearly every other question discussed in the Church of God. Following such a principle every preacher in the Church would build up his individual sect."**

At the time I was convinced that "the *Octographic Review* **family" was the body of Christ to the exclusion of all others. There were real problems. Any party dominated by a strong personality, regardless of the sincerity of that person, treads a narrow line and walks on thin ice. The publishers of the** *Apostolic Review* **could wield a powerful influence on men and congregations and did so. Division is a natural result of such an arrangement. In Long Beach, California, men who were powerful preachers came under suspicion— A. M. Morris, W. P. Reedy, Ralph C. Yadon, Stephen and Silas Settle. Charges were preferred and a disgraceful scene enacted in the Long Beach meetinghouse where rival factions held meetings simultaneously and tried to "sing each other down."**

The "brethren out west" as they came to be known, started their own paper, a rival journal to "the *Review*,**" and those who supported the latter regarded the other as traitors. They were referred to as "the Long Beach element" or "the Morris faction." The charge against them was that they had "gone soft on the pastor system" and were hiring preachers at a stipulated**

salary to take over the pulpits. Men who had been regarded as "faithful" for years were suddenly branded and no longer called for meetings.

To complicate matters further, trouble began to surface in the Sommer family, not a new thing. Because one could not get a "clergy certificate" for reduced rates on the railroads if he derived part of his income from the sale of books or from editing a paper, Daniel Sommer placed the editorship of the paper in the hands of his wife. Her name appeared appeared on the masthead for years— Mrs. K. W. Sommer, Editor. She did not take her position lightly and when her husband became involved in a church trouble in the west she cut him out of the paper and refused to print his articles. "There was no small stir," as the inspired writer would phrase it.

Even before that happened, D. Austen, a son who resented having been left off of the family editorial staff, started his own paper which he designated the *Macedonian Call***. In it he frequently slated articles at the** *Review* **and when his mother died, and his two brothers and one sister (Chester, Allen and Bessie) took over, he increased his attacks. Because he was traveling much of the time as a preacher he found an opportunity to sow the seeds of doubt about the moral, spiritual and scriptural soundness of his brothers, and a great many long-time readers became suspicious. They watched the paper carefully for indications of a trend away from the traditional views. In 1932 they thought they had found such indications.**

The June 21, 1932 issue carried an article simply signed "Review Publishers" and entitled "Can't We Agree on Something?" It began with the words, "To those of the Churches of Christ who desire a plan for Unity, we submit the following for your consideration." Fifteen points which had been controversial were discussed. The document proposed that colleges, orphan homes, and societies be disassociated from congregational relationships and maintained by individuals.

"The Church Contribution is not for that purpose." It suggested that the "Church Contribution" be used for "spreading the Gospel and taking care of the poor."

Each congregation would decide for itself how much preaching or mutual edification it would have. Bible classes were not to be organized into separate departments, and those who opposed them could stay away from them without censure. Actually, the statement was somewhat innocuous and tame when looked at in retrospect, but it became explosive in the atmosphere in which it was launched. No sooner did it hit the mail than D. Austen Sommer zeroed in upon it and called for all "loyalists" to rally round the flag to do or die for the cause we loved.

Although the publishers of the *Review* replied to the attack by saying it was simply a rough draft of suggestions intended to encourage a restudy of our divided state with a hope of alleviating it, the opposers (of whom I was one of the most vocal) labeled it a written creed. The description of it by the publishers gave us a handle and we called it "The Rough Draft" and this made it possible to identify the supporters and the denouncers of it. Daniel Sommer disclaimed any knowledge of the composition of the document but came to its defense when he became aware of the rabid opposition.

His intervention did not help. D. Austen Sommer said his father was in his dotage and had become soft on the issues because of his age. He pointed out that Alexander Campbell had done the same thing with the missionary society, but Daniel reminded everyone that when Campbell embraced the society he was the same age as D. Austen. Everywhere there were cries that the *Review* had betrayed the church and "let down the bars so the college preachers could come in and wreck everything, including the faith."

I was twenty-four years old when the storm broke and in

my partisan enthusiasm was the one who accepted the challenge of the 82 year old Daniel to debate the issue. Fortunately, the debate did not materialize, but in our correspondence he expressed his sadness that I manifested so much zeal with so little knowledge. He also told me he had hoped his mantle would fall on my shoulders, and that he had earlier thought of Austen as his successor, but was disappointed that he had proven himself to be "a splinter off the butt-cut of humanity."

The situation of the Sommer family became more intense. All communication between D. Austen and the others broke down. Meanwhile the cry was raised among us to force every preacher to take a stand on the "Rough Draft" and to publicly declare himself. In many articles the quotation appeared, "Mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which you have learned." In others we were reminded, "If any man come and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, and neither bid him Godspeed."

With such a spirit rampant among us, division became inevitable. Separation was regarded as the will of God. Maintenance of purity of doctrine by segregation from the compromisers was urged upon every side. The agitation for a mass meeting to be held in a central location to deal with the question became almost universal. There were no doubt some cool heads who cautioned care but they were in the minority and they were shouted down. We wanted action. It was time to show your colors, to put up or shut up! The day for deliberation was past. I think I was one of the ringleaders and I stayed in the thick of the fray by letters and articles. Parties must have "issues" to survive and in the absence of real ones they create their own!

2. Marriage and Evangelism

St. Louis, Here We Come!

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The stage was set for a gathering of preachers and other interested persons to discuss what steps should be taken to unite our forces against the "Rough Draft." Kansas City was a central location. An invitation was extended by the elders at 26th and Spruce Streets to use their facilities. W. E. Ballenger, a widely recognized preacher and a member of the congregation presided over most of the meetings. Man after man mounted the platform to speak against "the departure from the faith" of the *Review* publishers.

It was generally agreed the *Review* was gone. The time had come to look elsewhere for "brotherhood leadership." Since the *Macedonian Call* was already being published and D. Austen Sommer had stood firm against his brothers we decided to back his journalistic effort. Those who continued to write for or report through the columns of the *Review* would be regarded as having departed from the faith. A document entitled "The Rough Draft— Its Sponsors— Also Its Outworkings— Why We Are Against It" was drawn up by D. Austen Sommer. A great many men signed it. Like John Hancock, I wrote my name big and bold. I also collaborated with Brother Sommer in drawing up another paper analyzing "the Rough Draft" and urging all who loved the Lord to lift up their voices against it.

Our action served to create another schism in an already

divided movement. It also doomed the exclusivistic Sommer faction to death. Our actions were injudicious and our reactions unwarranted. I was wrong in what I did. A lot of things I wrote and said in the time of tension were absurd. I do not try to excuse them on the basis of youthful immaturity. I was sectarian in attitude and filled with pharisaic pride. I helped to create another arrogant and hostile party even though I acted in all good conscience. That I became a recognized leader in it was a tribute to my dogmatism and aggressiveness. I am ashamed of both of them. They only added to the sin.

If we had regarded the so-called "Rough Draft" as merely another newspaper article and allowed people to read it for themselves without trying to inject political prejudice into their minds it would not have caused a ripple. But when we took up our cudgels and attempted to beat brethren into submission we made a grievous error. It was a sin to call a general meeting in Kansas City for the purpose which prompted it. And it was a sin to create another party among those in the undivided Christ. That it fell my lot to become a "chief of sinners" in promoting the resultant mess is no comfort.

Legalistic sects secure no peace by division. So long as the spirit which prompted and encouraged the division remains, they only lay the groundwork for additional strife. Before it was all over Brother D. Austen Sommer, motivated by fear of the growing popularity of *Mission Messenger* **which I published, became increasingly hostile to my work and refused to even meet with me to effect a reconciliation. When I laid my whole sectarian spirit down before the Conqueror of my person and heart, some of the brethren with whom I had long been associated as a champion, took up arms against me, regarding me as a Benedict Arnold or a Judas Iscariot. They were acting as sincerely as I had acted when I engaged in the same tactics and they were employing toward me the methods I had taught them by precept and example. One should not complain too much if he is fed from a spoon he polished himself. But there is**

something wrong about a system which breeds jealousy and envy instead of love, and which forces us to reject those who grow closer to Jesus, while accepting those who stagnate or wither on the vine!

Our new association flourished. Some of the most outstanding preachers of the gospel in the 1930's were a part of it. They were men who knew the Book and were powerful proclaimers of its message. There was no dearth of congregations and they were scattered from the Atlantic to the Pacific. In Missouri alone there were 120 congregations with which we could labor. Our cause was relatively strong in Indiana, Illinois and Ohio. We were now "the faithful church" as distinguished from the "Rough Drafters." We were separated from each other by a newspaper article and the interpretation we placed upon its value. It is of such fragile cobwebs that sects are born with the strands being reinforced by human pride, fear and stubbornness.

It was during this period I was called upon to make a decision which would affect the remainder of my life. I went to St. Louis to conduct meetings for the brethren who met at 7121 Manchester Avenue. There were two meetings, each of two weeks duration. The first was in the autumn of 1934, and there was such an ingathering of souls that, after the meeting ended the brethren had to remodel the building and install a balcony to take care of the increased attendance. While I was there the leaders approached me about moving to the city which was known as "The Gateway to the West." They wanted me to labor with them by personal visitation to build up the cause. I promised to think about it but the bigness and noise of the city with its frightening influence had little appeal to me.

During the next two years the labors in Nevada and the harvest field were very satisfying and rewarding. Our children were growing and the relationship with the saints was pleasant and encouraging. In spite of this the suggestion planted by the

brethren in St. Louis was beginning to appeal to my sense of purpose.

The congregation in St. Louis began with five women who had moved to the city from rural areas. The leading light was Bertha Robinson who came from north Missouri. With the help of her sister Mabel she began the work. Nell and I are agreed that, of all the people we have ever met, Bertha Robinson was the most saintly. Neither she nor her sister ever married, but both were truly wedded to the Lord and to Him gave their unstinted devotion. They did home baking for a select clientele and were famous for their cakes and cookies which graced many parties given by the socially elite.

When they moved to the city they never missed a Lord's Day of remembrance of Jesus. They set the Lord's Table in their home and were led to find three other sisters who had gone to the city and who met with them. Realizing that many would not meet in a home they decided to rent an upstairs hall on Vandeventer Avenue. They placed a modest advertisement in the classified section of the Saint Louis papers, alternating in the three news journals. Every Sunday Bertha prepared the items for the Lord's Supper and carried them on the streetcar to the meeting site. Here the five women sang hymns, prayed, studied the Word, and encouraged one another in the Lord. For weeks they petitioned God to send them a brother who could help by conducting the meetings.

The first man to attend was Edward Burtchinger, a Swiss gardener and yard man who had been brought to the United States to care for the grounds of a large estate. He was more of a problem than a help. He could not do anything in the public meetings and did not believe the women should. Bertha Robinson questioned him about every item in turn, but he could not sing, would not teach, and contributed only his presence and objections. The women, confronted with the dilemma of offending God or man, quickly reached a decision. They

continued to carry on the meetings as before. Brother Burtchinger still attended.

The first real break came when Robert Morrow moved to the city from near Dixon, Missouri, having been reared in the faith in a rural congregation where all participated, he was capable of edifying and exhorting. With his advent others soon followed. The little group multiplied in number until they decided to purchase a place of their own. They soon learned of the meetinghouse at 7121 Manchester, located one block from the city limits, and with excellent trolley service from all sections of the city. This was an important consideration in a day when few families owned automobiles.

I first spoke for the brethren there when I was still a "boy preacher" and was passing through the city enroute to a meeting in the Lead Belt area. When I came back in 1934, which was eleven years later, I was 26 years old. The congregation was growing in numbers and in knowledge of the truth. There was an array of talent and I have seldom seen such a wealth of teaching and speaking ability. Robert Morrow lived next door to the meetinghouse and acted as a wise counselor. He was aided by a number of brethren who had gravitated to the city from Missouri and Illinois— Wilson, Thompson, Bilyeu, Janes, Smith, Baldwin, and many others, capable proclaimers of the Word. The greatest asset, however, was the number of young married couples, and the alert and spiritually aggressive young people, many of them still in high school.

The brethren wanted me to come for two reasons. First, they held the concept that congregations should be small and active, keeping every member occupied and busy in spiritual things. They wanted me to train every man to function in whatever capacity he could, and when the congregation attained to approximately 150 in regular attendance, take 30 or 40 and plant them as a nucleus in a new locality. They spoke of moving into the world by colonization, with the idea that the original

congregation would supply the new group whatever was necessary until they could stand on their own feet.

As we discussed it, they used the illustration of a strawberry plant which puts out runners on all sides and starts new plants, until eventually a garden plot is covered and the fruit is abundant. The idea was not to erect huge material buildings, but to keep them small, and when the congregation outgrew the facilities, to plant a new one rather than to "tear down the barns and build greater." Repeatedly it was said that when bees fill a hive they swarm and the number of hives increase as a result. It was believed that so long as the brethren could maintain a family feeling, visiting one another in their homes and in hospitals, all sharing together at picnics and basket dinners, there would be less loss by attrition and desertion.

All of the men, some of whom were skilled in business and held trusted executive positions, felt that the same principles which were being used to weld together into a team the workers in industry, could be applied in modified form to build a congregation into a fighting unit in the army of the Lord. As they outlined it, my work as an evangelist, would be to go with each new group that was planted, remaining to teach and train them until they could function on their own. When bishops had been developed, selected by the saints, and ordained to function, my work in that congregation would end. I would then be free to go elsewhere and duplicate the process.

There was a general consensus that nothing could weaken a congregation quite so much as hiring a man to do the work which God ordained for all the members, and while rapid numerical growth would be experienced by such a method, it would amount to increasing the number of weak and dependent members whose trust was more in man than in God. My task would be with new congregations where I would work myself out by working others in.

Secondly, the brethren felt that my knowledge and insights, which they greatly over-estimated, should be made available on a wider scale so that young men could be imbued with a desire to take the Good News to a world of suffering mankind and could be trained for more effective service in their communities. It was proposed that I teach an annual Bible Study to which men and women might come without charge for enrollment or tuition. In connection with such a study I would teach public speaking, vocabulary expansion and word studies, employing the Bible as the only textbook.

The prospect was appealing since many congregations had young people of promise who were anxious to learn the word of God more perfectly. It appeared to be an opportunity to strengthen the future potential leadership of the churches. I had already decided I would like to have our children reared in a large city environment where they could have cultural benefits not available in a more restricted area. St. Louis was a historic spot which attracted men and women seeking jobs, from every section of the Missouri Ozarks, as well as from states like Arkansas, Kentucky and Tennessee.

What I did not realize at the time was that we were considering becoming a part of the restless current flowing from rural areas to urban centers and that we would be on the cutting-edge of a tremendous national transformation which would eventually upset and destroy many of the traditions we had cherished. It seemed wise to move because I could better promote the cause to which I was dedicated. As I talked with the brethren the question of support arose. I expressed my opposition to making a contract or having agreement on a fixed salary. I told them I was willing to come and they could provide for my needs as they saw fit. One of them said, "You make the move and we promise you we will not allow Nell and the children to starve." It was the only financial agreement we ever had.

In years to come as they attempted to give me increasing amounts I repeatedly refused them accepting only what was essential to meet our immediate needs. When they insisted on exceeding this, Nell and I simply returned it to the congregation with our thanks. I felt that if I took more than our need required, God would cease to bless us. I did not want to become a "peddler of the gospel." I wanted to share what I had to offer and I was content for the brethren to "share with him that teacheth in all good things."

I suspect now that my decision to move was a traumatic experience for Nell but if it was she kept it in her heart. We liked Nevada. We liked our simple house. We loved the people very deeply. It was heartbreaking to leave them. Many of the older ones wept, thinking they would see our faces no more. They were especially reluctant to give up Jerry and Sue and imagined all sorts of dire things which would happen to them in the city. The whole congregation felt a kind of proprietary interest in the children.

Our plans to move were complicated somewhat by the fact that I was to become involved in my first major debate. I had previously engaged in skirmishes of a local nature and had probably become too fond of this kind of thing. I had gone looking for "trouble" at tent meetings of various kinds and had gloried in the fact that sometimes the Pentecostals had threatened to call the police and have me arrested.

Now I was to meet Rue Porter, a brother of renown, especially in southern Missouri and Arkansas. He was a skillful tactician on the forensic platform. Men who knew him well and who were on his side, predicted he would skin me alive and hang my pelt on the barn door. I regarded all such prophecies as a part of the "psyching process" practiced on opponents. But since this was the beginning of numerous battles I will give a fuller account in my next chapter.

3. Debates at Home and Fellowship Abroad

The Debating Years Begin

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The little town of Ozark is the county seat of Christian County, Missouri. It is built around the courthouse square, and is a lovely and peaceful community except when a trial of note takes place in the courtroom. Perhaps the most exciting of such events was when the leader of the "Bald Knobbers" was sentenced to death a number of years ago. Bald Knobbers were a lawless element ruling the hill country by threats and violence. They took their name from the rock-strewn treeless crests of hills where they hung their signal lanterns when getting ready for a foray. When the law finally caught up with them, the leader was sentenced to "hang by the neck until dead" and the sentence was carried out on an open scaffold erected in the courtyard. It attracted about the largest crowd ever seen in Ozark.

It was in Ozark I debated Rue Porter four nights, March 23-26, 1937. The debate resulted from a chain of circumstances. The congregation at Ozark had only one elder left, Charles F. Boyd, a respected attorney, and for a number of years the County Superintendent of Schools. In 1933, while I was in a meeting at Nixa, he arranged for me to conduct a similar meeting at Ozark the following year. As the date for the meeting was approaching he was visited by several members of the congregation who had recently moved into the area and who demanded that he cancel it. They objected that I was not a "loyal preacher," being an opponent of orphan homes and colleges

created and maintained by the brethren. They did not want their names associated with that of an "anti." Brother Boyd firmly insisted he would not dispense with the meeting purely on the basis of their protests.

As time for the meeting drew near a number of them walked out and formed a rival congregation which began meeting in the Klepper Funeral Home. I conducted the meeting for which I had been scheduled, and while I was there announcements were posted about town to the effect that Rue Porter, of Neosho, Missouri would hold a meeting at the other place. Meanwhile I received a letter from Elton Abernathy who had graduated from Abilene Christian College and was associated with the Speech Department of the University of Iowa, suggesting that we discuss the whole question of "extra institutions" at Springfield, Missouri. He proposed a public debate there during the Christmas holidays of 1936.

I accepted at once and secured the promise of wholehearted cooperation from the brethren in Springfield who opposed the institutionalizing of the teaching and charitable functions of the body of Christ. While I was preparing for the encounter I received a letter from Brother Abernathy bowing out of the discussion and apologizing for even suggesting it. The brethren whom he purposed to represent had notified him they did not want these matters discussed in their area and would vigorously oppose such a debate. It was at this time word was conveyed to me that Brother Porter had publicly stated in a meeting at Ozark, held under the auspices of the brethren who were meeting in the Klepper Funeral Home, that we did not have a man among us who would dare to stand on the same platform with him and debate these matters.

I immediately wrote to him and told him I was picking up the gauntlet he had flung down and would gladly engage in a discussion with him. We agreed upon all of the details without lengthy correspondence. The Works Progress Administration

had erected a lovely large Community Hall in the center of Ozark and we decided to use its spacious auditorium. There was no other place large enough to accommodate the audience. Excitement ran high and almost a thousand people crowded into the little town each night for the event.

Although I had never met Brother Porter, I knew a great deal about him and all of it was good. He was in the generation preceding mine, being twenty years older than myself. He was approaching his forty-eighth birthday, and I was less than two months away from my twenty-ninth. During the debate he constantly referred to me as "the boy." Brother Porter was one of a special class of preachers produced by the Churches of Christ in Arkansas and the Missouri Ozarks during that era. Many of these had no college training, but they knew the text of the Bible so thoroughly they could reel off whole chapters of it in one sermon, giving "book, chapter and verse" for every point of emphasis as they constantly reminded the audience.

They made great sacrifices of time and comfort, going often into remote rural areas for meetings, and being away from home for weeks on end. They held meetings in schoolhouses, brush arbors, and in the open air, as well as in little white meetinghouses. Often they were underpaid, sometimes taking a side of bacon, a gallon of sorghum molasses, or garden produce as part of their remuneration. Many of them gratified their hearers by "skinning the sects" and nothing pleased them more than to goad the Baptists into a free-for-all, and a verbal tug of war! Of course there were Baptists who loved it also, and men like Ben M. Bogard of the Landmark Missionary Baptist Church held there was no closed season on Campbellites. These country preachers on both sides were as "keen as a briar" and each one knew exactly what his opponent would say in reply to his arguments.

When Brother Porter and I met he had already engaged in twenty-five debates, all but one with Baptist preachers. He chose

as his moderator, Joe Blue, another well-known hill country preacher and debater. I selected as my moderator W. G. Roberts. He was always ready to tangle with anyone in debate but specialized on Mormons. His favorite proposition was: "Resolved that Joseph Smith was a polygamist, a thief and a liar." He was ready to affirm it at the drop of a hat and if no one dropped a hat, he would throw down his own and affirm it anyhow.

My initial meeting with Brother Porter was when I shook hands with him on the platform the first night. In appearance he reminded me of Abraham Lincoln. His was the first affirmative, so he would both open and close the debate. The proposition he affirmed read: "The erection and maintenance of orphans homes, such as Tipton Orphans Home, Southern Christian Home, and others of like character, for the purpose of housing and otherwise caring for orphan children, is authorized by the New Testament scriptures." When the hour arrived to begin Brother Blue called on Brother H. H. Kiestenkamp of Rolla, Missouri to lead in prayer. Each side always called on a visitor favorable to their position. Neither side recognized an opposing preacher as worthy to talk to the Father.

After his preliminary remarks during which Brother Porter defined the terms of his proposition, he turned to the scriptures which he insisted authorized the building and maintenance of orphan homes. They were James 1:27, Ephesians 2:10, Galatians 4:18, Hebrews 13:16, and Romans 12:13. He declared that James 1:27 "will be the rallying ground and the center of the controversy, as the place around which every argument I shall make will be built. I propose to make but one argument on this entire proposition. One argument!"

My reply will be obvious to the reader, and I made it! When we are to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, Brother Porter denied that the word "go" included a missionary society. By the same kind of reasoning,

when we are told to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, I denied that the word "visit" included a charitable organization or society. Moreover James 1:27 not only enjoins one to visit the fatherless but to keep himself unspotted from the world. I asked Brother Porter what kind of an organization he would recommend for the last half of the verse.

The reporter for the Springfield newspaper who covered the event did a lengthy write-up after the first night. It featured the debate on the front page with headlines and carried over to the back page in a kind of blow-by-blow account. The cartoonist who accompanied the reporter did caricatures of both debaters. As a result of the publicity the feeling was a little more intense the second night. As I pressed my respondent, Brother Blue interposed several times while I was speaking. Brother Porter and I never "lost our cool" but some in the audience were not so calm. After the discussion for that evening was ended the people refused to leave. They stood about in small groups assessing the merits of the speeches. An elder passing by one small knot of brethren, overheard one remark, "That Ketcherside ought to be taken out and tied to a tree and whipped."

On the third night it was my turn to lead out. The proposition read: "The erection and maintenance of schools or colleges, such as Abilene Christian College, David Lipscomb College, and others of like character, for the purpose of teaching the Bible and other branches of learning in connection, is contrary to the New Testament, and should be opposed as an innovation in the church." My moderator collaborated with Brother Blue in urging the hearers to leave the debating to the men on the platform and not to "get warm under the collar" as some did the night before. He called upon D. Austen Sommer to lead the prayer and then introduced me for the first affirmative.

After defining my terms in formal fashion I said, "I shall demonstrate that the Bible College is the introduction of something new into the Church of Jesus Christ and should be

regarded as something not apostolic, and therefore, contrary to the New Testament Scripture." I then proceeded with a chain of scriptural passages which had about as much bearing on my theme as the ones cited by Brother Porter did on his. I reinforced my charges with quotations from Alexander Campbell, J. N. Armstrong, David Lipscomb, the Freed-Hardeman College Bulletin and the Abilene Christian College Bulletin. Some of these were a little careless and unguarded in their statements and played right into my hands. I had researched them meticulously and had them indexed like a Philadelphia lawyer.

Brother Porter was indeed a worthy respondent. He placed the questions we were discussing in the realm of opinion, saying, "These are questions of an individual nature. They are for the Christian to decide as an individual. It is a matter of opinion not a matter of law. No, sir, it isn't a matter of law." His position was that a teacher in one of the schools was simply an individual exercising his right and duty to teach the Bible as he would in the home or on the street. Brother Porter told who did not own the schools, but he never told who did.

When the fourth night of discussion was ending and time was called on Brother Porter, he said, "Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, the debate is over. May God bless every one of you. Carl, I want to shake your hand as a manifestation of my friendliness toward you. I love you, and will be your friend for as long as we live."

I replied, "Thank you! I appreciate greatly the opportunity of discussing these issues with you, and I hope the time will come when all of God's people may be one in Christ." When I said it, I knew there would never be oneness until Brother Porter and all who stood with him reached the conclusion that I was right and they were wrong, and came to do obeisance and confess their error for endorsing such things as the orphan homes and Christian colleges.

But my respect for Brother Porter, already great, increased with the passing of the years. When he grew old and was unable to continue in active labor in the vineyard because of his infirmities, an appeal for financial assistance was made to pay for his heavy doctor and hospital expenditure. Nell and I wrote him about our prayers on his behalf which were fervent and sent a check to help in his time of distress. His reply was gentle and gracious, and when I heard that he had been summoned to meet the Lord I felt a real sense of personal loss. I expect to meet him some day in a land where there will be no further challenges and fellowship will not be judged upon the basis of earthly knowledge or of human conformity.

I doubt that the debate changed many minds. People left with the same prejudices they had when they came. The same congregations remain in Ozark although four decades have come and gone and most of the principals in the original cleavage are asleep with their fathers. The division has taken on new dimensions with the passing of time. It has solidified and crystallized. There is little remembrance that the saints once ate together at a common table.

But the discussion launched me as a debater in a factional orbit. I think now that I thought more highly of myself than I ought to have thought. This feeling was no doubt enhanced by the fact that congregations with whom I had labored in Springfield, Saint Louis and Kansas City publicly challenged Brother Porter to meet me in their cities. He at first indicated he would but then declined to do so. This stimulated my unholy egotism, especially when I learned from a reliable source that several preachers told Brother Porter that if he debated the issues with me in these centers he would set the cause back fifty years.

I confess with some little regret, and even a sense of shame, that I delighted in such confrontations. I liked being the "gun-toter" for a small party and taking on the best that the big

"main-line" churches had to offer. Before I became convinced of the detrimentality of debates to the cause for which Jesus died I debated most of the recognized gladiators of that era— G. C. Brewer, G. K. Wallace, Sterl Watson, W. L. Totty, Flavil Colley, and others.

We were lawyers for the prosecution seeking to interpret as a legalistic code the revelation of God given in love. All of us, without realizing it, were casuists, justifying what we did and condemning what others did, and doing so arbitrarily. We were defending a pattern which was not there and seeking to impose a binding dogmatism which God did not impart. But we had to go through this stage. It was a part of the maturing process for a movement seeking for status in a world made up of ancient religious forms which were hallowed and respected because of their age. We could, like children, call attention to our presence by fighting one another. I suspect the world looked on with amusement at our antics. I now look at them the same way!

3. Debates at Home and Fellowship Abroad

"He Being Dead, Yet Speaketh"

Contents

I am writing this chapter on the forty-eighth anniversary of our wedding. I am doing so because it is also the thirty-ninth anniversary of our arrival in Saint Louis. Nell and I had come to the city a few weeks before and rented a modest cottage on Page Avenue, and then returned to Nevada to go through the traumatic experience of closing out one phase of our earthly sojourn. By the afternoon of June 23, 1937, the moving van backed out of our graveled driveway and started the journey across the state. Soon after, we followed in our automobile, and after staying all night at a motel enroute, arrived at our new home the next morning to find the movers there awaiting our coming.

Almost immediately we were caught up in the work of the congregations. I use the word in the plural because the brethren had decided not to wait our arrival to plant another community of believers. About fifty of them banded together and purchased a modest meetinghouse at 5344 Lillian Avenue, in the northern part of the city. A great many of the most talented brethren were associated with the new effort, but there were men of promise remaining with the original congregation, some of them still quite young. The older congregation held its midweek meeting on Wednesday night and the new one on Thursday night. On each of those nights brethren from both places were together exploring the Word. On Sunday nights there was an exchange of

speakers and it was as if one large family, living in two houses, met together for visitation and sharing.

The Thompson and Bilyeu families bought a sizeable acreage in the beautiful and fertile Florissant Valley, and Brother Leonard Bilyeu developed five acres as a kind of playground for the brethren. Every fourth of July, all of the brethren from congregations on both sides of the Mississippi River gathered for a day of physical relaxation and spiritual uplift, and in late autumn all returned again for a wiener roast and a time of rejoicing in the presence of one another. There was a closeness among the families such as is seldom seen, and although rigid discipline was maintained in the congregations, it was not heavy-handed and authoritarian.

I began at once a door-to-door visitation in the area adjacent to the Manchester site, and soon a number of brethren joined together to place an invitation in every home in a carefully mapped-out territory. Meanwhile the brethren in the northern part of the city were knocking on fifteen hundred doors, and when I was free I went to work with them, helping to take a religious census which became a valuable aid in our future endeavors. Both congregations began to grow numerically and the fruit of hard work and fervent prayers could be seen. I do not recall ever seeing a more makeshift baptistry than the one at Manchester Avenue. It consisted of a steel stock tank installed beneath the floor of the speaker's platform, but scores of people were immersed into Christ and no one ever made a complaint about the inconvenience.

Before the first year was ended it became apparent that we were ready for the second phase of our plan. We had two congregations functioning without a special minister and with a leadership which knew how to involve the membership in active participation. A different speaker delivered a message of edification and exhortation each Sunday morning and evening, and the classes at midweek meetings were taught by various

brethren who made diligent preparation. Open expression of different views was encouraged in the studies, and although firm opinions were set forth, I do not recall any rudeness or imposition. I took my turn in speaking, but most of the time I listened and learned from clothing salesmen, production line workers, bookkeepers, night watchmen, bakers and others. All of them drew upon incidents in their own lives to illustrate the message for the rest of us and we were thus permitted to hear a great many modern parables.

It was now time for us to share our life in the Lord on a wider basis. The brethren met for several lengthy sessions to talk about and plan the approach we should take in helping to develop the talents and abilities of those who were eager to prepare themselves for greater service. At the outset it was agreed that we would not organize anything. I would simply teach the Word of God with the Bible as our only textbook. The studies would be made available to any person, regardless of age, who wanted to come. There would be no tuition or charges of any kind. We would have a six-weeks course in the winter, on the same schedule as the public schools, starting at 9:00 a.m. and closing at 4:00 p.m. Each week there would be two night sessions of two hours each. One of these would be held at 7121 Manchester Avenue, the other at 5344 Lillian Avenue. All day classes would be at the Manchester Avenue address because of the accessibility to modestly priced eating places in the area.

Members who wished to do so would open up their homes and rent sleeping quarters to students. Other students would find such facilities in private homes near the place of study. This was never a problem and as time went on many of the students made a profound spiritual impact upon the homes where they rented rooms. One day each week the sisters from each congregation would bring home-cooked food at noon and serve it in the basement to all who wished to partake. It was expected that on these two days there would be sufficient food remaining so the out-of-town students could eat again that evening. So

many persons were directly involved that the congregations were alive and active and all were sharing in a great learning experience.

A good many preaching brethren attended, and a number of young men and women who had just graduated from high school came to study before entering college or university. From the outset it was agreed we would not try to develop a certain class of brethren. We were afraid this would lead to a clerical caste. We decided to abide by the dictum of Benjamin Franklin, the gospel preacher, who said, "Teach the whole Bible to the whole church, and the leadership will rise to the top as cream rises on the milk." Ten congregations in the area opened their pulpits every Sunday to men who were attending, and thus heard a different speaker every Sunday morning and night. Some of these never intended to become evangelists, but many of them did become elders at a later date.

It soon became apparent that we could extend the period of intensive study and we doubled the time to three months. We did a great many interesting things together although the class grew to approximately one hundred. Every Thanksgiving Day we studied until noon and then went to a nearby Masonic Temple where we had rented a huge dining hall for the occasion. We had a basket dinner followed by a program of edification in the afternoon at which anyone could speak briefly about what was upon his heart.

When we studied about the death of Joseph and the embalming of his body, I took the whole class for an afternoon at the beautiful art museum. I had been accorded the privilege of lecturing on Egyptology in the "mummy room" and frequently the talk on the technique of embalming, made especially vivid by the sarcophagus on display, attracted a number of tourists and visitors who thought it was a regular feature presented by museum personnel. When we reached Exodus and Leviticus, we went on Friday night at sunset to Temple Israel where we

occasionally outnumbered the Jewish worshipers at the first sabbath service. I became so well acquainted with the senior rabbi, Dr. Ferdinand M. Isserman, that he frequently announced, "We have Dr. Ketcherside and numerous of his disciples with us tonight, and after the blessing of the Torah I am going to request that he come forward and bring us a greeting." I never failed to express our gratitude to the Jews present because their fathers had guarded the sacred oracles and given us the Messiah to sit upon David's throne.

Every passing month in Saint Louis brought new triumphs of the Spirit, but there was an air of foreboding over the country which aroused fear and unrest in the hearts of the people. The name of Adolf Hitler began to appear on the front page of the newspaper every day. In March 1938 the German regime annexed Austria. In September goose-stepping troops occupied the Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia. In the same month Neville Chamberlain, prime minister of Great Britain, sought to halt further inroads by signing the Munich Pact, representing a policy of abject appeasement. Hitler continued his ruthless acts of aggression and Chamberlain was forced to declare war on Germany on September 3, 1939.

Meanwhile we continued with "business as usual" in Saint Louis, although most of us realized that the United States would become actively involved. As President Roosevelt began to step up the preparedness program people began to move to the city, attracted by jobs and higher wages. The meetinghouses were filled on Sunday. The contributions grew perceptibly. Meanwhile, when Germany invaded Norway and the British forces were defeated, Chamberlain gave way to Winston Churchill, who told the British people, "I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears, and sweat."

All over the country, factories began to hum with intensified acceleration. Munitions manufacturing plants worked around the clock. Bombing planes were turned out with

the precision of clockwork. Great army camps began to spring up in strategic locations, and it was at one of these posts my father became the first civilian casualty of World War Two, losing his life on October 25, 1941. He had hired on as a carpenter supervisor at the largest wage he had ever drawn in his life. He had dreams of paying off his debts in a very few weeks. For the first time in his life he would be free of the burden of owing money to others. He told my mother that as soon as he made enough the two of them would take a vacation and return to the place where she was born and lived as a girl.

He was sent to Neosho, Missouri to do construction work on Camp Crowder, but he was able to work but three days. The heavy autumn rains had fallen for days on end and the field was a quagmire. On the third day after his arrival, my father was working on a high scaffold bolting sections of a huge pre-fabricated dining-hall together near the roof. A shudder went through the structure and those who could leaped from it as it began to collapse. It drove the body of my father four feet into the earth and almost every bone was broken. He survived long enough to whisper his name and that of my mother through the bloody froth bubbling from his lips, and then the spirit fled from the crushed and broken tabernacle.

I went to Neosho to meet my mother and claim the body and we rode back to Topeka together. I think we were numbed by our loss. When the mortuary closed the night before the memorial service was to be held, I asked permission from the mortician to stay for a few minutes. He allowed me do so, and we were alone for the last time on earth— a boy and his dad. As I looked at him it seemed that he moved. It appeared that his chest raised and lowered as if he were breathing in gently the precious oxygen which we all inhale without thinking about it. But I knew it was fantasy. I would never be able to speak to him again in the flesh. He would never hear me preach again, and I would never hear the good news from his lips. I made him a promise that I would keep the faith until we met. I closed the

door softly and walked out into the night.

When we arrived in Saint Louis and I examined the mail there was a postcard from my father. It was written the night before he was killed. He told me how pleased he was to be in a place where there was a congregation which he could help without taking any financial aid. He also told me that he was sorry to have to be away from home and then added a phrase which seemed almost prophetic: "Sometimes we have to be absent from each other so our joy will be greater when we meet again." I still have the card. At the time when I first saw the old familiar handwriting, I thought, "He being dead, yet speaketh!"

A short time later I wrote an article for a special issue of *Macedonian Call* **which was devoted largely to the life and death of my father. I am taking the liberty of sharing with you the first rather lengthy paragraph:**

"I stood with bowed head beside an open grave a few weeks ago. The sun had hidden her face, and a gray sky wept tears, as the chill of the autumn afternoon crept into the blood of those who stood to look down upon the mountain of flowers surrounding a simple casket. I stood with my hand upon the shoulder of one of the dearest women on earth to me— my mother, for there before us cold and rigid in death lay her husband and my father. The last song had been sung at the mortuary a short time before, and now a faithful brother in Christ was speaking his final words. Many of those who stood near were wiping away the tears which stole silently and unashamedly down their cheeks. But I could not weep for him who had gone on before. One does not weep for the hero who dies in his struggle for principle, who surrenders his armor to the only enemy strong enough to conquer him— death! I have often wondered as I stood beside other graves as the speaker, just how I would feel when I stood beside one as a mourner. I knew now, and somehow the emotion was different than I had imagined. For mingled with the indescribable pang of regret that

I would never hear my dad speak again, there was an almost glorious feeling, an uplifting thought bordering on happiness, that he died triumphant, uncompromising. I knew now what Paul meant when he said, 'We sorrow not as others which have no hope.' The world is emptier today than it has ever been for me, and heaven seems strangely closer than I ever conceived it. But overcoming that feeling of personal loss is the joyful thought that the grave cannot always be victorious over our beloved dead."

My father had been doing personal work in Riverside, California, going from door to door, soon after Daniel Sommer died. He knocked on the door of one of the elders of a congregation composed chiefly of members from Texas. This man said, a little contemptuously, to my father, "I see where your leader died." Dad replied, "Yes, and if you will read a little further in the same book, you will see that he rose again."

3. Debates at Home and Fellowship Abroad

Mission Messenger Begins

Contents

I am sure we made a lot of mistakes in the work in Saint Louis. Many of these were the result of attitudes. I can see now that we were quite exclusivistic, the first symptom of the sectarian spirit. It is probable that we could not have done too much to promote unity of the brethren at the time because the climate was not right. Bridges must be built from both sides of the stream. Our approach to unity was quite simple. If everyone else gave up what they thought and joined in with us we would be together. There was no other way because we were the Lord's people. Our way was "the way that is right and cannot be wrong." We were no different in this respect than other factions in the area. All of us thought that our group was the one which heaven had established and all recognized the others as apostates and teachers of heresy.

There was a constant open season on proselytizing. We rejoiced when one from another group "learned the way of truth more perfectly" and took his stand with us on "the old Jerusalem gospel," as we liked to think of our puerile system of traditions and opinions. We were all agreed upon one thing, even if we could not agree upon anything else. Instrumental music had originated with the family of Cain, was perpetuated by Satan, and was the sign and seal of spiritual departure and degradation. The Christian Churches had sold themselves to sin and when one of their members came around us we "Mistered"

him while we reluctantly "Brothered" all who opposed the instruments even if we had to do it with our fingers crossed because they were "brothers in error."

It is obvious now that we had little consciousness of a vital personal relationship with the Lord. We were all affiliated with an institution whose chief men were skilled in legalistic nit-picking and who could "make out a case" for our procedural policy. Righteousness was not so much right standing with the Lord of glory, but standing right on the issues in which we gloried. We were very negative in our attitude toward the Holy Spirit and sought to confine him not so much to a compilation of printed pages, which would have been bad enough, but to our own understanding and interpretation, which was worse. This meant that if the Spirit did not work within the limits in which we worked and to which we assigned him, it was not the Holy Spirit at work at all, but Satan.

Not everything was bad, and we inaugurated some life-touching experiences. Perhaps the period from 1942 to 1947 constituted one of the busiest five years of my whole life. During that time the brethren started the third congregation. Taking about three dozen folk from Manchester Avenue who lived in the vicinity of Webster Groves, they planted them in a decrepit structure purchased from a defunct Pentecostal group. Emery Smith, who had moved to the city from Salem, Missouri, agreed to look after this group of humble people, and from the start they had "a mind to work." Brother Smith, who supported himself by hard manual toil at Missouri Bitumen Corporation, spent his spare time training, counseling and strengthening the saints. Because of their relative poverty the congregation at Manchester Avenue supplemented their contributions so they could meet their financial obligations.

Members of the other congregations went from work each evening to labor on the building. The sisters brought the evening meal and served it and there was a thirty minute prayer and

praise service every evening while eating the "love snack," after which all returned to the task to continue until midnight. We grew as a spiritual temple even as the material building became more habitable. On December 18, 1946, the brethren at Manchester Avenue met to discuss the planting of the fourth congregation, and to pray for God to open up an effectual door for the fulfillment of their plans. It is interesting to recall that I was not even in the city when any of the congregations were started. All of them were started by the elders who told me about it when I returned from work elsewhere.

I developed a series of tracts to use in sowing the seed. We took advantage of the latest printing techniques, employing modern typefaces and illustrative material. We used these in "saturation bombing," marking out areas of the city in which we covered every house. Brethren carried a supply with them, distributing them at work, passing them out on streetcars and buses, putting them in letters to friends and using them wherever opportunity was presented. At Manchester Avenue a tract rack was erected close to the sidewalk and kept supplied. Other congregations in distant states learned about them and asked to purchase them, so that we began printing them in lots of 50,000 at a time. Even to this day, in out-of-the-way places I still run into stray copies of "This Way and That Way," "Daughters of the Horseleech," and "Human Ostriches." They are yellowed and faded now!

In 1943 we started a thirty minute radio program called "The Church of Christ Hour." It was aired on Sunday afternoons. Three singing groups alternated, and when I was out of the city, Hershel Ottwell directed the program and presented my talks from the script I had prepared. Hershel and I had known each other from boyhood in Pike County, Illinois. He was younger than I, but had been present when I presented my first talk at Old Pearl, where his family also attended. He was a great fellow-workman and did an excellent job on the radio. One cannot afford to make too many errors in a live presentation. I

do not recall Hershel making any. The program averaged a pulling power of 400 letters per month. The greatest return for a single speech was 468 pieces of mail.

The manager wrote to inform us that the program was by far the most popular on the station. We never mentioned money and never asked for a contribution, but we received enough voluntary gifts to pay the entire cost some weeks. For a number of years after we closed the broadcasts I found individuals at various functions where I was the speaker who told me, "I used to listen to you on the radio every Sunday." At the end of each quarter my radio talks for the thirteen weeks were printed in book form. Some of the titles of these little volumes are indicative of their content, such as "The Bible versus False Theories," "Proven Proverbs," "Storm Clouds Over America," "The Sermon on the Mount," "Happy Homes," "Actions in Acts," and others like them.

It was late in 1945 I got into the publishing business in a very minor way. I brought out a rather large cloth-bound volume under the title *New Testament Questions***, by E. M. Zerr. I followed this with a compilation of some of the writings of W. G. Roberts which we called** *Lessons From Yesterday***. In 1946 we began to plan publication of** *Bible Commentary* **by E. M. Zerr. It required a great deal of time, effort and money. Before it was completed it covered six volumes which cost a total of almost $35,000. At the outset it became apparent that Brother Zerr was not trained to write this type of material, in spite of his comprehensive knowledge of the Bible. Cleona Harvey, who was secretary to the dean of the Indiana State School of Dentistry, agreed to read and edit the entire manuscript. The arrangement did not suit Brother Zerr very well since he did not appreciate another telling him how to say what he wanted to say. But when I pointed out to him a whole lot of typographical and other errors in the first volume on which he had insisted correcting the proofs, and told him that I would not publish any further volumes without editing, he reluctantly consented.**

A lot of the material was written in our home. Brother Zerr refused to work more than four hours daily on the writing. He arose before 4:00 a.m. and downed a couple of mugs of strong coffee and started promptly on the hour. When 8:00 a.m. arrived he stopped writing, even if he was in the middle of a sheet of paper. He composed at the typewriter and produced almost flawless copy insofar as margins and the number of lines were concerned. He worked six days per week and stayed with the stupendous task until he became the only man in the restoration movement to produce a commentary on the entire word of God. We brought out 3000 sets of six volumes each, which means that we sold 18,000 volumes. I coined the publicity phrase, "the commentary of the common man," after hearing Brother Zerr tell repeatedly how his cousin, Noah Smith, at Sullivan, Illinois, had said, "Now Eddie, if you do write a commentary don't wade in too deep and get over our heads. Just write it for folks like me and act as if we don't know nothin'."

Perhaps one of the most significant things I did in Saint Louis was to begin publication of a monthly journal called *Missouri Mission Messenger***. It was originally intended to be a chronicle of activities and news events of our party in the state. By keeping all of the congregations informed as to what was transpiring it was hoped we might be encouraged to greater activity and service to the Master. Gradually subscriptions began to come in from other states and eventually it seemed appropriate to drop the word "Missouri" and simply call it** *Mission Messenger***. It was no longer a provincial publication.**

At the time of its inception we had no idea that the paper would ever be sent to more than 8,000 readers, upon every continent of the globe, each month. It was only after I became convinced that what we termed "the Church of Christ" was not identical with the one body for which Jesus died, but had been fashioned into a party growing out of a historical attempt to restore the primitive order, the paper really began to be read more widely. The first article on fellowship was printed in 1957

and brought both public and private attacks from preaching brethren with whom I had labored. After the initial hue and cry, which I sought to answer in a spirit of loving concern, the paper reached out beyond our narrow and circumscribed factional limits. It was almost as if my own spiritual encounter had been timed for supplying a deep need of those who were growing tired of the party spirit with its wrangling and strife, its bitterness and hostility. But more about that later!

As mid-1946 approached, plans for my trip to Great Britain had progressed to the point that a date for going and an itinerary abroad had been worked out. Nell and I would leave Saint Louis on Tuesday, February 18, after I had finished the six-weeks annual Bible Study. It was a busy time of preparation, but then something occurred to make it busier. In late September I was visited by a large delegation of preachers from the other "Churches of Christ" in the area demanding that we debate the Bible College issue "once and for all." They were inviting Dr. G. C. Brewer of Memphis to represent their position and asked if I was afraid to meet him. I was not, and it turned out we had two debates within three weeks of each other, one in Saint Louis, the other at Freed-Hardeman College during their lectureship.

Brother Brewer submitted his affirmation which read: "The organization of schools and colleges as David Lipscomb College (Nashville, Tennessee) for the purpose of teaching the Bible and other subjects in connection, is in harmony with God's Word, and therefore scriptural." I signed it without a quibble. The debate was held in the auditorium of the Saint Louis House, the nights of December 16, 17, 18, 19. More than 600 persons attended each session. W. L. Totty moderated for Brother Brewer, E. M. Zerr for me. Presiding over all sessions was the Honorable William R. Schneider, a nationally known jurist, author of the Workmen's Compensation Law, and formerly a candidate for governor of Missouri.

It was evident our opposing brethren had made a good choice in Brother Brewer. He was distinguished in appearance, an orator of note, and a man of culture. He was a member of the faculty of Harding College and had been given his honorary degree of Doctor of Laws by the school. Many brethren sympathetic with his views flocked into Saint Louis, among them being Eugene S. Smith, publisher of *Gospel Broadcast*; Dr. George S. Benson, president of Harding College; A. B. Barrett, president of Florida Christian College; Frank L. Cox, of *Firm Foundation*; Edward J. Craddock, of Chicago; G. A. Dunn, Sr., of Dallas, Texas; and L. C. Sears, dean of Harding College.

Unfortunately, Brother Brewer jerked the rug out from under some of his supporters by taking the position that the schools were adjuncts to the church and represented the church at work. He said he had personally made pleas for their support from the treasuries of the churches, and had urged that they be put into the regular congregational budgets. A lot of brethren who were on his side of the fence told me that if what he said was correct they were more sympathetic toward my position than toward his.

Brother Brewer was so pleased with the conduct manifested in the debate, he suggested that the two of us hold a series of "Lincoln-Douglas" type debates in all of the college auditoriums. He further suggested that we begin at Freed-Hardeman, and Dean Sears invited us to hold the second at Harding College in Searcy, Arkansas. The Freed-Hardeman debate was held before an overflow crowd on January 7. We discarded the use of moderators since both of us knew we could act as gentlemen. W. L. Totty acted as timekeeper for Brother Brewer, Fred Killebrew served in the same capacity for me.

I took the position that the apostles planted a school for teaching the Bible in every city where they labored, and that Jesus Christ was the president; the apostles and evangelists were the recruiting and field agents to secure students for the

institution; the elders and others under them constituted the faculty; every disciple was an enrolled student, with the only textbook being the Word of God. I asked him to find the place where any of the apostles ever created the kind of organization he was defending.

It was a great day and the two sessions were conducted in good order with great response. At the close, N. B. Hardeman arose and said that since I had now taught in Freed-Hardeman I might like a job on the faculty.

3. Debates at Home and Fellowship Abroad

On Board the *Queen Elizabeth*

Contents

In these days of almost casual tourist travel it is difficult to explain the problems incurred in going to Great Britain in the early part of 1947. We had been in close contact for three years with Albert Winstanley, an outstanding young preacher of the gospel from Lancashire, who was by this time in Newtongrange, near Edinburgh, working with the Scots brethren. He contacted the various districts and we had drawn up an itinerary which would keep me occupied almost every day while we were in Great Britain. Since the first contact with Adam and George Bruce in Windsor, Ontario, in 1929, correspondence had been exchanged with saints abroad, and now sixteen years had elapsed, and we were waiting for a frightful war to cease.

On May 7, 1945, at a ceremony in the headquarters of General Dwight Eisenhower, at Reims, General Alfred Jodl signed an unconditional surrender of Germany's armed forces to the Allies. On September 2, just four months later, General MacArthur and Admiral Nimitz accepted the formal surrender of Japan aboard the battleship *Missouri* in Tokyo Bay. Vast areas of the cities in England lay in ruins. The task of cleaning up the rubble and restoring order from chaos would take many months.

I contacted a steamship company representative who said there were no sailings yet and even if there were I would have to

secure a priority from the State Department. The State Department informed me there was a doubt the English Government would approve travel at the time. I went to the British Consul who asked me to make application to His Majesty's Passport Approval Bureau. The bureau notified us they would grant a visa for travel in the United Kingdom. The Cunard Lines told us they had a waiting list "a mile long" when passenger traffic was resumed. We wired New York and found that the *Queen Elizabeth* was scheduled for her first eastward trip, after converting from a troop-carrying vessel, at the very time we wanted to go.

After our reservation was confirmed we set about getting a passport. It was not easy because of the war restrictions still in vogue and it was necessary to file three notarized letters from the Manchester Avenue congregation before we were granted permission to go. When all of the legal requirements had been met other details had to be arranged. The children were in high school but Nell's father and mother agreed to come to Saint Louis to look after them during our absence. It was not easy for them because her father was the mayor of Flat River, as well as an elder in the local congregation.

Because of severe food rationing in the United Kingdom we arranged for congregations to send food parcels to help out. Some items were in shorter supply than during the war, among them fats, sweets, fruits and soap. Regulations permitted the sending of only one parcel per week by any person or firm, and the weight of each parcel was limited to 22 pounds. We assigned various areas in Great Britain to congregations which wanted to help, and each congregation sent one parcel per week for three weeks, making a total of 66 pounds sent to each place. Manchester Avenue congregation sent to the Lancashire District; Hartford, Illinois to Birmingham; Anderson, Indiana to Belfast, North Ireland; while other brethren sent to Kirkcaldy, Glasgow, London, etc.

When it was announced publicly that I planned to make the visit to the United Kingdom at the invitation of the brethren, it apparently created consternation in the ranks of the "mainline" Churches of Christ in the United States. They resolved to thwart it at all costs. The political propaganda machines were turned on full blast. All who had any relationship with congregations in Great Britain, especially American servicemen who had been stationed there, were urged to write and insist that my visit be cancelled. It was decided that the one person best qualified to offset any influence I might exert was John Allan Hudson.

Brother Hudson, who is best known as the originator of the Old Paths Book Club, had served as the minister of Southwest Church in Los Angeles, where he assisted the George Pepperdine Foundation, but was currently with the congregation at 39th and Flora Avenues, in Kansas City. He was well-known to the British brethren because of his work in Birmingham, as well as in Australia and New Zealand. With their characteristic zeal for local autonomy, a group of preachers met together to plan the strategy for stopping my work in Britain before it began. It was decided the best way to do it would be to support a "faithful preacher" in England for a whole year, preferably Brother Hudson. His chief objective would be to keep the British brethren from hearing me. A few weeks before I left home I received this letter from a brother in Britain:

"Brother John Allan Hudson has written to say he is flying over here to be in Britain before you arrive. I thought I ought to tell you this, so that you should be prepared. Yesterday I learned that he had decided to come to Britain (supported by churches in the U.S.) for twelve months. This was to be from April onwards, but apparently, on hearing of your proposed visit, he decided to come earlier. You may draw your own conclusions from this. But I do want you to know it will in no way interfere with your visit, or upset the arrangements in hand. There is

much I want to discuss with you regarding Brother Hudson's visit, and we shall be able to talk it over thoroughly while you are here."

The "Central Intelligence Agency" of the American Churches of Christ did its work well. Form letters were sent to the elders of many of the congregations where I was to speak. Later on, after Nell and I had been guests for several days in the homes of such brethren they would bring out the letters and we would read them and have a good laugh about them. They uniformly classified me as dangerous, divisive and destructive to the peace and welfare of the body of Christ. All of them made dire predictions of what would happen to the British churches as a result of my coming. One of them concluded with the frightening admonition, "You have been warned!"

Our American brethren who are accustomed to seeing elders "roll over and play dead" or "jump through a theological hoop" when certain preachers issued an ultimatum reckoned without the British brethren. They did not understand the innate sense of fairness which caused them to hear a man out before assessing him as guilty. They did not take into account the quiet stubbornness which resented interference from across the Atlantic. I am afraid some of the Scots had stereotyped Americans, perhaps from the movies, and thought they all wore wide-brimmed hats and cowboy boots, and slapped strangers between the shoulder blades and said too loudly, "How you doin' podner?"

I went one day to visit a precious aged sister who lived in a tiny stone cottage in a colliery village. She spoke with a brogue as thick as porridge. You could have sliced it with a knife. If her daughter had not been there to interpret neither of us would have known much about what the other was saying. But it was apparent she liked me from the start and I loved her and the cozy little "hoose" in which she lived. When I led a little prayer and was preparing to leave she was pleased I had not shown up

wearing a big "bonnet" and "yelling like a coo-boy."

One day at Ulverston, I was sitting before the grate with Brother Walter Crosthwaite, the sage of the Old Paths movement, and one of the saintliest men I have ever met. He was preparing tea in a soot-covered kettle. Neither of us had said anything for several minutes. Then he spoke, almost as if in reverie and to himself. "All of the real problems which have plagued the churches in Britain in the past have come from America." After a pause he added, "Most of them from Texas." That day he paid me the highest compliment I received in his country. "I thank the Father for allowing Nell and you to come, and for making it possible for you to stay in our humble abode." He did not realize, in his unsurpassable humility, that to be with him was a mountain-top experience I could never forget.

Now we will get back to our trip. On Tuesday morning, February 18, a group of thirty brothers and sisters gathered with us for breakfast at the Fred Harvey Lunch Room in the Saint Louis Union Station. After we had eaten together, Nell and I bade our children and the others a rather tearful farewell, and boarded the famous *Sunshine Special* pulled on its eastern journey over the Pennsylvania Lines track. Twenty-four hours later, at 7:30 a.m., we arrived in New York City with thirteen hours to spend before boarding the huge ship which was scheduled to sail in the early morning hours.

Since neither of us had ever been in New York City we were like "babes in the woods," gaping and gawking at soaring skyscrapers, and "sunburning our tonsils" gazing upward in open-mouthed amazement. Fortunately, no city slicker buttonholed us to try and sell us the Brooklyn Bridge. We had heard about Automats but had never seen one, so we ate a large breakfast at one and then went on a walking tour of Rockefeller Center. From the 70th floor of the RCA Building we could see the *Queen Elizabeth* lying in dock at pier 90. Further on we could make out the Statue of Liberty which we would pass next

morning.

At 8:30 o'clock that evening we joined the throng milling about and boarded the greatest vessel of her day. Since that type of transoceanic travel has now passed away, supplanted by air transportation, I would like to describe one of the queens. The other was the sister ship the *Queen Mary*. The *Queen Elizabeth* was rated at 83,673 gross tons, with 14 decks. The vessel was more than five city blocks long, 118 feet wide and 234 feet from keel to masthead. The total space available to passengers for deck games and strolling exceeded in area 2½ football fields. There was even a special exercise area for dogs and each day the pampered pets were brought from the ship's kennels to be paraded around.

There were three anchors, each of which weighed 16 tons, and 2,000 portholes containing 2500 square feet of glass. There were 30,000 electric lights and 4000 miles of wiring. In all there were 35 public rooms— lounges, smoking rooms, dance halls, restaurants, children's playrooms, libraries, swimming pools, gymnasia, and three theaters. One of these seated 338 persons. The area of the First Class Restaurant was 13,133 square feet. On the main deck was located the winter garden with a profusion of fresh flowers. Here the ship's orchestra played classical selections at afternoon tea and again at night. Here also one could obtain free a copy of the "Ocean Times," a newspaper published on board each night.

On "A" Deck there was a large shop retailing everything from safety pins to men's shirts. On the same level was a barber shop for men and a beauty shop for women, as well as a smoking lounge with comfortable seats for several hundred. "B" Deck contained the nursery, a tourist gymnasium, a cinema and a large library. I checked out a copy of "This Man Truman," written by an Englishman. I got back out of some of the expressions such as "biscuit-barrel politics," which is as close as the British can get to our "cracker-barrel politics." Winston

Churchill was right. We are a single people separated only by a common language.

We traveled "tourist" which was cheapest. Our stateroom had a lower and upper bunk-style bed, wardrobe, dressing table, chair and wash basin with hot and cold water. The space was restricted and while one did not actually need to back out into the corridor to turn around it would have helped. It was our home for six nights, the last at the expense of Cunard Lines. We warped into the dock at Southampton promptly at 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 25. Tourist passengers were to disembark at 4:00 p.m. Then it happened! After part of our luggage was already off, a dock strike was called and none of us could leave the vessel.

Passengers became infuriated. They besieged the Purser's staff. There was cursing, shoving and yelling, but all to no avail. Staterooms had to be made up with clean linens and the chefs had to serve an extra dinner and breakfast. Although we were sorry to disappoint the brethren waiting for us at Waterloo Station in London there was nothing we could do. After dinner the Winter Garden was crowded but there was no orchestra. Without asking permission I mounted the platform, took over the microphone, and called for attention. I pointed out what an extraordinary opportunity this was to become acquainted and to hold an open forum on world conditions. We had people present from many nations, we had just seen the end of a disastrous World War, and I felt we should quit talking about our own temporary inconvenience and discuss openly our divergent views of world problems.

I suggested we stay on each subject exactly one hour and allow any man or woman to speak. We discussed marriage and divorce, then family responsibility and authority, and last of all the changes taking place in moral and ethical values. I adjourned the meeting at midnight over the shouted protests of many who wanted to continue. It was interesting to see how

quickly order had developed out of chaos. The meeting was made to order for me. As the self-appointed chairman I injected the teaching of the Bible into the discussion at the end of every speech. If anyone asked a question of the chair, I answered it with the words, "Of course, the Bibles says . . . ."

The next morning we abandoned ship at 9:00 o'clock, and exactly an hour later the boat train pulled out for London. Immediately evident were the signs of the bombing raids made on this great harbor city. Whole blocks were wiped out. Fire-gutted buildings were everywhere. Our train arrived in London promptly at noon. We stepped into a new world. At home we always "checked our baggage" but in London we "registered our luggage." The station was huge and there were several large restaurants. We chose one and ordered our luncheon. It consisted of pork and peas cooked together, mashed potatoes, and coffee. If that sounds like a lot of potatoes, it is because this was one of the few items not rationed.

After we had eaten we boarded a taxi and went madly dashing down the wrong side of the street toward the friendly home of Brother R. B. Scott.

3. Debates at Home and Fellowship Abroad

High Adventure in Great Britain

Contents

Almost every believer who knows anything about it is willing to concede that the union of forces of the restoration movement in the Unites States and the United Kingdom seems an act of providence. The work in the latter had its roots in the Scotch Baptist development. In 1833 there was a small congregation of this persuasion meeting on Windmill Street, Finsbury Square, in London. There were hardly ever any visitors, but one Lord's Day morning a young man walked in and sat down near the speaker's platform. He was Peyton C. Wyeth, an American artist enroute to Paris to perfect his talent. He was born at Claysville, fourteen miles from Bethany (then in Virginia), knew Alexander Campbell personally, and had been immersed into Christ.

While in London he had visited various places of assembly only to be disappointed. On the Saturday before the day to which we refer, he had asked God to lead him to a place where men worshiped according to the ancient order. While walking the streets on the Lord's Day morning he found the chapel on Windmill Street and entered. One of the elders was William Jones, author of the *Biblical Encyclopedia of the Waldenses*, and other books of religious significance. When Wyeth told the elderly man there was a great and growing movement in the new world, whose members worshiped as they had that day, Jones was astounded and almost overwhelmed with emotion.

Jones knew of Campbell only as the brilliant opponent of Robert Owen in a debate held in Cincinnati four years prior. He had no idea that Campbell was pleading for the primitive purity of the church. That afternoon in his home he had Wyeth write to Campbell, virtually dictating the letter. A lengthy correspondence was inaugurated which resulted in Jones creating the *British Millennial Harbinger* which reprinted so much of what Campbell was writing. Out of this grew the visits of Campbell to Scotland and England, with their overtones of gladness and sadness, about which many of us know.

That's the way it began in London and I thrill to it. But I am convinced that no one can write the history of the cause I love, as it pertains to London in this century, and ignore the sacrificial work of R. B. and Mary Scott, and the little group of saints meeting at Hope Chapel, in Prince of Wales Road. I had heard of the Scott family from American servicemen who made that home their gathering place during the war. The family consisted of our genial brother and sister and their four children, Margaret, Dorothy, Isabelle and John. In spite of the fact that Brother Scott was employed as a clerk (the British pronounce it 'clark') and had a limited income they kept "open house" for saints from all over the earth.

Our first introduction to a meeting of the disciples in Great Britain was the day we landed. It was Wednesday, and after tea in the Scott home, where we also met Leonard Channing, a tireless young student and worker for the Lord, we made our way to the little chapel, riding our first double-decker bus. The night was bitter cold. Because of a severe fuel restriction there were no street lights. It was darker than the proverbial "stack of black cats" and we had to hold hands to keep from becoming separated. The little meetinghouse, more than a century old, had been damaged in a bombing raid. No permanent repairs had been made because of priorities on building materials.

We met in a tiny vestry behind the speaker's platform.

There were just twelve of us. The gathering was quiet and solemn, with no talking or laughing. Brother Black, down from Dalmellington, Scotland, presided with the same formality as if there had been a thousand present. He began by announcing a hymn to which we turned in a little book called "Hymns for Churches of Christ" which contained 1036 hymns, all without staff or notes. Brother Black suggested the name of the tune we would employ. He then read the first stanza and then we stood and sang the hymn. I do not recall ever seeing an audience in Great Britain remain seated while singing praise to God. After a fervent prayer by Brother Scott, a brother read the first chapter of First Corinthians. Brother Black expounded upon it from notes he had previously made.

Following this I was asked to speak and was then questioned about what the brethren abroad uniformly referred to as "the American scene." Some of the questions were quite pointed. The American doughboys who had attended during the war had come from all sections of America and all segments of the restoration movement and had efficiently conveyed their own confusion to those whom they met. Some from the same town in the United States met at Hope Chapel and had never heard of each other, because of the rigid factional lines drawn at home. It took a world war to get brethren from the same village to shake hands and attend at the same place. It was very difficult for brethren in a land where there was no "color bar" to understand why there was a "white church" and a "colored church" in the same community.

When we arrived back at the Scott home we sat before the grate on this wintry night and talked for hours. It became apparent to me that it would be difficult to explain to brethren in Britain the multi-faceted complex in America known as "The Church of Christ." It also became obvious that it would be just as hard to portray the British scene to Americans. It was our mutual love for Jesus and His magnetic personality which drew us to R. B. and Mary Scott, and when we read a chapter together

and kneeled to pray before the glowing hearth, before the little night remaining would give us a few hours of repose, I felt that God was with us and moving in our lives.

The next morning at 9:00 o'clock we boarded a London Northeast Railway train at King's Cross Station, bound for Edinburgh. We were told there was no guarantee of making it because of the heavy blizzard of the previous day. English trains are very different from ours. The coaches are small and passengers occupy compartments entered directly from the platform and walled off from the rest of the train. Ours had room for six but we were alone in it when we left London. At noon we unwrapped the lunch prepared for us by Mary Scott—cheese sandwiches, Sultana bread and muffins, and a bottle of black currant juice to drink. Shortly after we finished eating, three soldiers entered our compartment. Two of them were taking back the third one who had been A.W.O.L. for seven weeks.

We gave them the remainder of our luncheon which they wolfed down with profuse apologies. They had eaten nothing since the evening before. All were members of the Durham Infantry, and stationed in an aged castle in which there was no heat at all. I began talking with them about Jesus and what He had done in my life. As I continued to share my faith with them they listened intently, occasionally asking a polite question. Time flew by and when they prepared to leave us at Newcastle-on-Tyne, one lingered behind, saluted and said, "Sir, this has been the happiest afternoon I have ever spent in my life."

Soon it was getting dark and the little engine was toiling through deepening snow. Finally we realized we were in a city. There are no conductors to come through and tell you where you are. You determine that from signs on the station platform. When the train stopped I saw no sign so I raised the window and asked if we were in Waverly Station. We were!

It was Nell who first spotted Albert Winstanley in the crowd. He was holding up a copy of *Scripture Standard*, our previously agreed upon badge of identification. "Uncle Will" Allen was there with one of his taxis and we soon covered the twelve miles to Newtongrange where we were to get our first sight of the work of our Lord in Scotland. God richly blessed us by allowing us to stay with "Uncle John" and "Aunt Mary" Pryde. All older folk are designated as uncle and aunt by the younger ones. I became "Uncle Carl" and Nell was always "Auntie Nell" by the younger folk. The Prydes had spent a number of years in the coal fields of Illinois, not too far from Saint Louis, and they eagerly awaited our coming. We somehow think they are still waiting our coming up there where they have long since gone.

Albert and I spent the first day walking from the home of one member after another, wading through deep snow. I shall not forget the cheerful cottage of "Granny Allen" who had been a member of the local body longer than any other person, far beyond a half century. In the evening I met with the oversight of the congregation to answer their questions. They were pleased to learn there were still brethren in America who contended for mutual ministry, and the right of all brethren to use their gift of edification. They made it clear they had thought that all the American churches had been betrayed by "the spirit of the age" to adopt the "one-man system" as they referred to the hiring of someone from somewhere to come in and pastor the flock professionally. They wanted to know how congregations administered discipline, and how elders were selected and appointed. They were especially interested in whether or not we voted for officers.

On Saturday, March 1, a bus load of us journeyed to Motherwell, near Glasgow, to attend the conference of the Slamannan District churches. A number of congregations had combined their efforts, with a special Evangelistic Committee to receive and disburse funds, and to recommend the places where

preachers were most needed. David Dougal, a brother of great preaching ability, was secretary of the conference over which Abe Haldane presided. It was interesting to us that when the Scots wanted to show approval they stamped with their feet rather than clapping their hands. Following tea, I was asked to speak and afterwards was questioned at length by the audience. Some of the saints were a little skeptical about anything bearing the imprint "Made in the United States" and we explored differences in our varied concepts, but in deep love and respect for each other.

There is so much to tell our story will seem unduly long, yet there is hardly any way to shorten it without doing an injustice. It was late in the evening when Nell and I trudged down the snowy streets of Motherwell to the friendly home of Willie Wardrobp. We were accompanied by his aged father, James Wardrob, almost 85, and the oldest evangelist in Scotland. He told us the history of the movement, with its hardships and trials, as vividly as if it were in "living color." That Saturday night was like a page out of "The Cotter's Saturday Night" by Scotland's favorite bard. Before we retired to our beds with their eider down comforters, our patriarchal brother summoned the family to gather in the glow of the ingle, as the fireplace was called. He opened "the big ha' Bible" and read from it with firm and unfaltering voice. All of us kneeled together and he lifted up his words of petition to "Heaven's Eternal King." I fell asleep with the words of the poem circulating through my mind:

Compared with this, how poor Religion's pride,

In all the pomp of method, and of art;

When men display to congregations wide

Devotion's every grace, except the heart!

The next morning the sun turned the snowbanks into millions of glistening diamonds for our first Lord's Day in Scotland. It was an invigorating walk between rows of ancient stone dwellings to the little meetinghouse. The procedure was so different from ours I must describe it. The table was set in the center of the speaker's stand. There was one chalice and a small loaf of leavened bread upon it. Three chairs were behind it. Promptly at the time for beginning, the aged James Wardrob, who was to preside, took the center chair. An assistant sat down on either side of him.

The president announced the opening hymn. He read the first verse with impressive voice. All of the audience then arose and sang. Then the president said, "Will some brother take us to the throne in prayer?" A volunteer in the rear of the building prayed. Another hymn was sung. A volunteer came forward to read an assigned portion of the New Testament. He was followed by another who read the Old Testament. Brother Wardrob then made an excellent talk about the meaning of the Supper. Thanks were offered and the assistants bore the loaf and cup to the audience in turn. Each person broke a bit from the loaf as it was handed to him. All drank from the one container. An offering was taken for the furtherance of the work and then a session of prayer was announced. Perhaps there were six or seven prayers in all, fervent and eloquent in their simplicity. Afterwards the president said, "We have been blessed of the Lord in having our American brother among us and I will invite him to come forward and exhort the brethren." Following my remarks there was a hymn suitable to the closing of the meeting and a benediction. It was all beautiful, impressive and touching.

Nell and I were invited for tea at the home of John Snedden. He was the youngest of the three bishops, being 83. John Anderson was 84, and James Wardrob 85. All three were together with us for tea. It was the first time I had been with three such men, all able speakers and debaters, all with a profound knowledge of the Book. John Snedden asked me if I

had ever met a Campbellite. I answered in the negative. He said, "Then you have a new experience today. I am a Campbellite." He meant it. Next to Jesus of Nazareth he admired Alexander Campbell of Bethany. To prove it he pitched in and recited Campbell's "Sermon on the Law" and would have given a goodly portion of "The Christian System" from memory if they had not announced that tea was being served.

What an afternoon that was! In the evening I addressed the "gospel meeting." The saints in Scotland have a clear understanding of the difference between "the breaking of bread service" and a "gospel meeting." The first is for the family of God. Non-members are not invited. If there is to be a Sunday School for the "wee bairns" it is held in the afternoon. It is not a part of the gathering for the edification of the body. In a gospel meeting on the Lord's Day night, the message is addressed to the world. It is intended to reach the unsaved with the glad tidings of what Jesus has done for them.

After it was all over we rode the bus into Glasgow, largest city in Scotland, with Brother John Anderson. His home was to be ours for a few days as we went to other nearby areas to share with brethren. My stay with this godly man provided one of the greatest thrills of my whole life. I am indebted to him for insights which helped to change my life.

3. Debates at Home and Fellowship Abroad

When the Snow Fell in Scotland

Contents

Glasgow was cold and gray and dirty from soot. The stores were without heat and the girls who clerked in Woolworth's wore heavy coats. One who waited upon us wore woolen gloves. The war years had depleted supplies and a large department store such as Lewis' had little to offer. At the close of our first day in the city I spoke to the little group of saints meeting in a storefront building on Hospital Street, located in the heart of a festering and decadent slum. Their faith in such a depressive area was to me a shining beacon in a bleak world. On every side of them paganism reared its ugly head, but they were not discouraged.

The following day five of us journeyed to Pennyvenie, by way of Ayr and Dalmellington. We visited the thatched-roof cottage of Robert Burns and I had a difficult time tearing myself away from the nearby museum with its many originals of the poems which had made the bard famous. At Dalmellington we sat down to tea in the hospitable home of Edward Jess. He was one of God's noblemen. There were but twelve of us present in the little schoolhouse at Pennyvenie, on a raw, cold night, but the warmth of fellowship will never grow dim in my memory.

On Wednesday afternoon we went to Slamannan and were received into the home of Brother Wilson for tea and scones. We were talking every minute. The house was one in which Adam

Bruce, whom we knew in Windsor, Canada, once lived. The village had also been the home of our beloved Harry Topping whom we knew in our own land. As darkness descended the men in our party walked down Station Road to the meetinghouse. It was a cold, crisp, snowy hike. The brother who presided over the meeting asked Albert Winstanley to sing a solo, and then requested Nell and me to sing. We used "Give Me The Bible" as our number. Later I spoke for forty minutes and then answered questions for an equal period of time.

Slamannan had been a center for the work of James Anderson, who was born near Airdrie in 1837. As a humble evangelist he had left a mark upon the whole district, planting congregations, defending the faith, and proclaiming the Word for more than half a century. John Anderson, in whose home we stayed in Glasgow was a worthy son of James Anderson, and served to tie together for us the history of the work in Scotland for a hundred years. It was a saga of labor and suffering, of smiles and tears, of sorrow mingled with hope.

When we prepared to say farewell to the Andersons they presented us with a replica of their tartan, and every time we look at it we recall the glorious fellowship with these members of a genuine clan. We went by bus to Blackburn, near Bathgate, to be received for tea into the home of John and May McCallum. After a satisfying meal of fish and chips we were off to the meetinghouse at Blackridge, where the heating pipes were frozen and we had to hold the meeting wearing heavy coats. When John McCallum arose to preside, his steaming breath ascended in a cloud. Despite the shivering experience the meeting was prolonged by questions and we left the gathering edified and strengthened, to spend the night with Joe and Agnes Kerr, who lived in a new pre-fab in Harthill.

I had written to Joe several times before we left the United States and it was a great blessing to meet him face-to-face. Agnes was a Burns enthusiast and entertained with "Tam-o-Shanter"

and several other poems, all delivered in a delightful Scottish brogue. The next morning, Joe, Albert Winstanley, Nell and I took the early bus into Edinburgh so we could see a little of the city before going on to Kirkcaldy, across the Firth of Forth. We walked down Princess Street, one of the most beautiful avenues in the world, and paused to look at the remarkable memorial to Sir Walter Scott, and the statue of Livingstone, the great missionary.

We climbed the steep hill to the great castle which frowns down as a lonely sentinel from the huge rock in the very center of the city. It was like moving into a world of a thousand years ago, for some of the buildings are that old. We tore ourselves away reluctantly to descend to street level and to the railway station. Joe Kerr returned home but Albert went with us as our train crossed the great Forth Bridge, that mile-long cantilever marvel constructed by Sir John Fowler and Sir Benjamin Baker, and finished in 1890.

I was anxious to get to Kirkcaldy which the natives call Lang Toon (Long Town) because it stretches out so far along the Forth. I knew it was the home of the great Nairn Linoleum factory, and that Congoleum had originated there, but one could have guessed that from the odor of linseed oil which hung over the city. At the station we were greeted by our genial host Dave Mellis, and his son Stanley. Dave was a "Wagon Inspector" for the L.N.E.R. lines, and in his home we found a hospitality which was warm and gracious.

The American restoration movement owes more to Kirkcaldy than most of us realize. In 1763, Robert Carmichael and Archibald McLean were conversing together in Glasgow when the subject of infant baptism arose, and each revealed he had some doubts about it. They agreed to study the scriptures on the matter and by 1765 Mr. Carmichael and five others were convinced they should be immersed. There was not a single baptist in Scotland to assist them, so they wrote to the eminent

Dr. Gill in London, whom Alexander Campbell later labeled an able expositor and critic, and asked if he would come and baptize them. He wrote that his age would not permit him to make the trip, but suggested that Mr. Carmichael come to London and be immersed and then baptize the others upon his return to Scotland.

Mr. Carmichael was baptized by Dr. Gill on October 9, 1765, and immersed the other five on the day of his arrival back in Scotland. In November he baptized two more, and when Mr. McLean moved from Glasgow to join them there were nine. They banded together to observe the Lord's Supper each week and to edify one another. They were called Scotch Baptists, not because of the country, but to distinguish them from the English Baptists. The latter embraced the one-man minister plan, whereas, according to a historian who wrote in 1883, "The church in Scotland was organized on the scriptural plan of mutual ministry, and a plurality of elders."

The first baptist in Kirkcaldy was a mole-catcher. He communicated his views to a Mr. Cooper who was baptized about 1784. They began to meet together and the work grew until the congregation was set in order November 15, 1798. In 1819 two brethren, Messrs. Tosh and Arthur, whose property joined, each took a piece of his rear garden and deeded it to the congregation for a building lot, and began erection of the Rose Street meetinghouse in which I was privileged to speak. Exactly one hundred years before I spoke from the platform of this building, Alexander Campbell spoke from the same spot. When he finished the congregation resolved to no longer call themselves after an ordinance but to become Christians only. They marched outside and took down their sign and erected one which read "Christian Meetinghouse." That was the sign which I saw as I entered the building.

We had a busy time in Kirkcaldy. On Saturday, March 8, the brethren held their annual social with 183 present,

representing a goodly number of congregations. The next day I spoke at "the breaking of bread service," the afternoon children's meeting for "the wee ones," and at the gospel meeting at night. The congregation had an excellent choir trained and directed by Sister Glass. They always sang at gospel meetings which also had a solo or two, in addition to the congregational singing.

On Monday we visited in the home of John and Agnes Wotherspoon in the country, before returning to town so Nell and I could speak at a meeting of the women of the congregation. The visit with the Wotherspoons impressed me greatly. They were set for the defense of the faith and knew the Word of the Lord. Their house had been built over a coal shaft originally, but had been moved. John had fixed it up himself and it was furnished with lovely antiques. There was a grandfather's clock which was huge, and there were two heavy mahogany chairs, beautifully carved, which had once been in the captain's quarters of a ship which sailed the route to India.

On Tuesday we went on a little trip which made our entire journey worthwhile. A bus from Kirkcaldy to Leven connected with the Anstruther bus which made its way through the narrow streets of villages squatting along the Firth of Forth until it came to a veritable story-book town called Pittenweem. We were met in this age-old fishing village by our brother, Neil Patterson, a leader of the little group of saints who met in the "Toon Hall" as the brethren called the Town Hall. We left the bus on a paved square in the upper part of the town. Narrow walkways bearing such picturesque names as Water Wynd, School Wynd, and Cove Wynd led from the brae down to the waterfront.

The harbor was filled with fishing boats, one of which belonged to Brother Patterson. Fishermen were working on their nets. Gulls strolled about bravely on the cobblestones just out of reach. The breakers rolling in crashed against the sea wall. We walked to the home of the Pattersons where delicious

homemade shortbread topped off the tea. Neil stood in front of the cheery ingle, and in a voice made strong by long years in a small dory upon the open sea sang hymn after hymn for us. Then in the company of Jimmie Hughes we visited the home of every member and prayed in each home. In the home of Sister Strachan her aged father regaled me with stories of more than fifty years of salt water fishing for a living.

The next day was to be our last in the "Kingdom of Fife" for Kirkcaldy lies in Fifeshire. It was a memorable day since it gave me an opportunity to meet Bro. Alfred H. Odd, an aged stalwart of the faith who began publication of a monthly journal *The Interpreter* **the year before I was born. The January 1908 issue listed 45 congregations in Scotland. At 6:00 p.m. we attended "Sunshine Corner" held every Wednesday for boys and girls, under the able direction of Sister Glass. I spoke for 20 minutes to the "wee bairns" and later to the older saints at the regular prayer meeting. It was late when we arrived at the Mellis home for fish and chips, but later yet when Walter Hoggan came in. This tall, handsome policeman was on night duty but was free to share with us. He was deeply concerned about preservation of the concept of mutual ministry and was fearful that with men coming from the states the Scotch brethren might be seduced into adoption of the one-man system. We talked until long after midnight.**

The next morning a blizzard was raging. Snow was drifting and some train service was curtailed. But we said a sad farewell to those who came to see us off and boarded the train for Waverly Station in Edinburgh where we arrived at noon. The double-decker bus which took us to Newtongrange that Thursday had to plow through accumulating snow. That night Albert Winstanley and I walked two miles back to town where I addressed a meeting of the sisters. Forty of them had braved the storm. Later I walked the two miles back alone. It seemed strange indeed to be hiking along a road in Scotland by myself at night. Overcome by emotion I stopped in the middle of the road

with the swirling snow shutting off vision and fervently prayed aloud for many minutes that men would come to revere the name of Jesus and that malice and hatred be driven out of our hearts so that we might love one another. Uncle John and Aunt Mary Pryde were sitting with Nell in front of a welcome fire when I banged on the knocker, and we continued to talk, unwilling to draw the curtains on this peaceful scene until the large clock struck the hour of one o'clock in the morning.

The Minister of Education in Edinburgh had sent a letter approving my visits to the Council Schools under his jurisdiction and on Friday afternoon I went to the first. The headmaster, Mr. Lamb, received me graciously, and I spent several hours talking to teachers and pupils. I could write a book about my impression of the contrast with American schools. At night I spoke to the children at "Sunshine Corner" and when we dismissed a number of boys and girls followed us to the bus stop where they formed a circle and held an open air chorus, singing lustily for twenty minutes with the snow sifting down upon us all. Pedestrians walking to their homes stopped and joined in.

On Saturday afternoon I conducted a two hour analytical study in the Philippian letter and spoke at the gospel meeting in the early evening. We lingered over the supper table at the home of Bro. George Robertson until 10:30 p.m. when Nell and I caught the last bus to Newtonloan Toll from which we walked a half-mile to Gorebridge where we were staying.

On Sunday at Newtongrange the children gathered at 10:30 a.m. for Bible Study, but the "breaking of bread service" began promptly at noon and continued until 1:30. From 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. I conducted the analytical study, and at 6:00 o'clock we began the gospel meeting. The audience was the largest in the memory of most of the brethren, and our hearts rejoiced when two precious souls resolved to put on Christ. We walked home in a driving rain which turned the snow into slush. We retired at 11:00 o'clock, the earliest we had gone to bed since leaving the

States. But we were tired.

The cold rain proved Nell's undoing and she became quite ill from a heavy cold. I had to go on alone, first to Bathgate, where a goodly number of saints had assembled in an upper room. I was impressed by the depth of their spirituality, and by the hospitality in the home of Brother Fleming, a great man of God. Next I was scheduled at Wallacestone, so-called from the stone which legend says was the one upon which the Scots hero, Sir William Wallace, sat in 1298 as he watched his men engage the forces of Edward I of England, in the broad valley below. As we climbed the steep hill toward the village my brain was echoing the words of the poem I had learned in elementary school:

"Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled—

Scots, wham Bruce has often led—

Welcome to your gory bed,

Or to victorie!"

Albert Winstanley and I were entertained in the home of another Scotch hero, David Dougal. An American, an Englishman, and a Scotsman sat down to tea, one in spirit through Christ Jesus. David was sincere and studious, and an able proclaimer of the gospel, as was Albert. To be with them was for me "a season of refreshing from the presence of the Lord." When David arose to open the gospel meeting the house was full. We were all uplifted in heart.

3. Debates at Home and Fellowship Abroad

Love Feasts in England and Ireland

Contents

The largest audience to which I spoke in Scotland was at Tranent. I first arrived there on Thursday, March 20, two days prior to their annual social which had been postponed a month to enable me to be present. I stayed in the home of Brother and Sister Wilson and it was extremely interesting because they could not understand my American dialect and I could not fathom their Scotch brogue. Had it not been for their daughter Jean, who translated for us, we would have been in a real predicament. But there was one thing I understood and that was the oat cakes made by Sister Wilson. I translated them myself. An excellent audience was present for the gospel meeting the first night, and the following night the greatest number of non-members to be seen in many years attended. It was apparent that the social might set a new record.

Brother Wilson spent the entire day making arrangements for the meat pies and other foods essential to serving those who came. Although everything was strictly rationed the government allowed special concessions to churches upon application. The social was held in the Town Hall auditorium on Saturday evening. Visitors were present from most of the places where I had spoken. There were 242 for tea. Afterwards Willie Steele presided and the Motherwell and Blackridge choruses rendered special numbers. Albert Winstanley spoke for fifteen minutes and I followed for an hour. I bade farewell to many precious

brothers and sisters whom I would never see again on earth.

The following morning I spoke at the Lord's Day gathering, and again in the afternoon to about 80 boys and girls. The house was almost full at night for the gospel meeting and my final message in Scotland. The next day Albert accompanied us on the seven-hour train trip to Ulverston, in Lancashire, and our first meeting with Walter Crosthwaite. The congregations which combined to support him rented "Ford Villa," the home where our aged brother and his good wife lived, and where the little band of saints met. What a blessing it was to us to stay with the Crosthwaites.

No other person I have met in my life has impressed me any more than this man. When the tide of compromise, augmented by American influence and money, began to sweep across the congregations in Great Britain many decades ago, he stood like a rock of Gibraltar. As a result his name became revered by some and despised by others. He was as unmoved by the praise of his friends as by the attack of his enemies. Now that he had grown older and was unable to travel as before, it was decided to take advantage of his scriptural knowledge, historical ability and great experience. Young men of promise were sent to live with him for many months during which they sat at his feet for training. Many of those who are active in Great Britain today can look back upon their association with this patriarch with deep appreciation for his help.

We spent hours together exploring our concepts and talking about the problems which had always troubled us as a people. The clergy system, open communion, methods of evangelism— all of these and many other things came under review. Brother Crosthwaite came to love and cherish Nell as one of his own children. One of our treasured letters from Great Britain after we arrived home came from him and mentioned "dear Nell" with special warmth. I spoke every night while in Ulverston in the little tri-cornered room which seated 34 people.

It was full every night with 18 non-members present the first night. One brother who came to share with us was Levi Clark from Barrow-in-Furness. We wrote to each other for years until his death ended our correspondence. I loved and admired him very sincerely.

Our time was not all occupied by meetings. One day we visited the famous English Lake Region. We went to the home of John Ruskin on Coniston Lake. We spent an hour at Bowness and the village church where George Washington's relatives worshiped three generations before his birth. Another day we went to the Quaker meetinghouse built by George Fox in 1688 after he had been imprisoned so many times for open expression of his opposition to war, slavery, and political and religious authority. Upstairs, over the simple meetingroom we found the plain bed and chair used by the persecuted crusader. The large Bible which he studied was upon the desk.

Nell and I had a lump in our throats as we said good-bye to Brother Crosthwaite and Sisters Wood and Ormandy at the Ulverston Railway station. I boarded the train for the Wigan District with a distinct feeling that one of the significant periods in my life had suddenly ended. At Wigan we were met by three outstanding men— Leonard Morgan, of Hindley; Carlton Melling, of Scholes; and Leonard Channing, then of London. Leonard Morgan was an owner of several shops and an elder at Hindley. We were scheduled to stay in his lovely home which was also graced by his wife, Doris, and little son John. Carlton Melling was an elder at Scholes, and employed in the public library at Wigan. He succeeded Bro. Crosthwaite as editor of *Scripture Standard*, **the paper published by our British brethren. It is currently under the efficient editorship of James Gardiner, of Haddington, East Lothian, Scotland. Len Channing resided in London, but was engaged in a gospel mission at Scholes. He was capable, active and alert, and already several had been added to the Lord through his personal efforts at Scholes.**

It had been arranged that I should meet the first night with the elders and deacons at Hindley. They were a fine group of brethren and they questioned me at length about my views of what was transpiring on "the American scene." I did not realize until later that this was one of the places to which John Allan Hudson had written warning the brethren against receiving me. Our visit turned out to be a glorious one. After seeing me, the brethren concluded they could probably handle any wild ideas I might advance, and after meeting Nell they realized that if my judgment about other things was half as good as it was in selecting a wife, England needed me. The Hindley congregation had produced three outstanding evangelists— Albert Winstanley, Frank Worgan and Tom Kemp. It was a blessing to me to be associated with them.

My first meeting in the district was at Scholes, with Leonard Channing presiding. At the close of the service two expressed their decision to obey Christ and Carlton Melling announced the fact with well-chosen words. The meeting on Sunday at Hindley was not hindered by the cold coupled with mist and rain. Leonard Morgan presided capably. The order consisted of a hymn, a prayer and another hymn. One brother then arose and read from the old covenant scriptures, and another followed with a new covenant scripture reading. The "prayers of the church" were called for and three brethren prayed in turn. Following another hymn the brethren contributed of their means. The president made an appropriate talk about the meaning of the Lord's Supper, and thanks were given for the bread and cup, and they were offered to the disciples. I was then invited to exhort the saints which I did briefly. There was no invitation given to aliens. This was a family gathering for the children of God, and not a gospel meeting. British brethren knew the difference.

At luncheon in the Morgan home we met Bro. Harold Baines from Morley, in Yorkshire, who informed us that all was in readiness for our visit to that area and promised that we

would be treated to the famous "Yorkshire pudding." At 2:00 p.m. we were back at the meetinghouse. Bro. Stephen Winstanley called the youngsters together, and after several choruses, dispatched them to their classes. I spoke to a room filled with older children and their teachers. At 6:00 o'clock I addressed an excellent audience present for the gospel meeting, and at 8:00 o'clock the house was filled for the second gospel meeting. Every seat was taken.

On successive evenings I addressed goodly crowds at Albert Street church in Wigan, at Blackburn and again at Scholes. One evening we held an open air meeting in the public marketplace. Wigan is the oldest borough in Lancashire, having been charted by Henry III in 1246. A hundred years before the American Declaration of Independence was signed the city was known all over the world for its manufacture of bells and pewter.

On Thursday night the brethren in Hindley held a Farewell Rally, attended by representatives from all of the other district congregations. It was evident the Hindley congregation possessed great potential for sparking the work throughout the British Isles. The elders were men of vision, the members of the body seemed consecrated, and the future appeared bright.

If I may digress a wee bit, let me inform you that Wigan was the original home of Miles Standish. He was a resident of Duxberry, Wigan, and named his New England estate after it. It is now well-known as Duxbury, Massachusetts. His wife Rose was the first to become ill on the fateful trip on the Mayflower, and the first to die. She lies sleeping in Burying Hill, at Plymouth Rock. His subsequent infatuation for Priscilla Mullens, who married John Alden, has very little historical basis.

On Friday we flew from Ringway Airport in Manchester, to Belfast, to attend the annual conference of British congregations. Our arrival by the air terminal bus in Donegal

Square was greeted by three marvelous people— Mary Hendren, Pearl Hunter and Robby Hendren. Since we were to stay in the lovely home of Sammy and Pearl Hunter, we took the tram up Ballygomartin Road, and walked up Glencairn Crescent to the house. The streets were lined with emergency bomb shelters, now being used as playgrounds by boys and girls. After tea we again walked through a lovely park to Shankill Road and then up Berlin Street to the meetinghouse, a former schoolbuilding purchased and remodeled by the brethren.

William Hendren presided over the welcome rally and, in characteristic Ulster fashion claimed that virtually all great men came from North Ireland, including 19 presidents of the United States, as well as Alexander Campbell and Saint Patrick. Speeches were made by George Hudson from Birmingham, England, and Andrew Gardiner from Glasgow, Scotland. I was also invited to speak as a representative of a former British colony which became upset over tax on tea.

On Saturday the conference business was transacted, and reports given, with Joe Hamilton presiding. In the evening William Hendren and I spoke. I was tremendously impressed with his knowledge and ability. The Lord's Day meeting began at 11:30 a.m., and made use of the talents of four English brethren— Robert McDonald, Dewsbury; George Hudson, Birmingham; Fred Hardy, Morley; and Stephen Winstanley, Hindley. George Hendren from Belfast also participated and I gave the exhortation. At the Children's Meeting at 2:30 p.m., Joe Hamilton introduced Stephen Winstanley and myself to speak after encouraging the "lads and lassies" to pay attention.

We adjourned for tea in the home of Granny Hendren, on Brussels Street, just around the corner, and at 6:00 o'clock were all back at the meetinghouse to start the open air meetings. Eighty people marched down the street singing, "Come Ye That Love the Lord!" Stops were made at four intersections with additional songs and an announcement of the meeting to follow.

The final open air presentation was directly in front of the meetinghouse. Later, as I arose to speak, the forms (benches) were filled to capacity and people were standing about the walls.

On Monday Nell and I visited the memorial to the Titanic which sank on her maiden voyage in 1912 with a loss of 832 passengers and 680 crewmen. We also went to the monument dedicated personally by General Dwight D. Eisenhower to celebrate the landing of American troops in the war so recently ended. After tea in the home of George and Rachel Hendren, I met with the oversight of the congregation consisting of Joe Hamilton, George Millar, William, Charles and George Hendren. They asked my permission for them to write the brethren in America to send me back to Belfast to help in the evangelizing of Northern Ireland. I little realized then what a change would take place in my life and thought upon my return. We held two open air meetings before the evening service and again the building was full.

The following day a chartered bus took all of the visitors for a tour of Northern Ireland, including the Giant's Causeway. We returned by way of Carrickfergus and the old castle where William of Orange landed and started the drive which made Northern Ireland a Protestant country by the decisive Battle of the Boyne, July 12, 1690. Our tour was on Junior Orangemen's Day which created enough excitement with its massive parade that the gospel meeting was not quite so well attended. It is hard to compete with the Orange Society in North Ireland.

On Wednesday night before the gospel meeting, Bro. Millar presented me with a well-preserved copy of the *Millennial Harbinger***. Thursday evening the meetinghouse was again crowded out. Seven had already obeyed the gospel during our stay and enthusiasm was great. After the regular service a farewell meeting was held, which began with the serving of tea and scones. Joe Hamilton presided. Rachel Hendren was called upon to make a speech of appreciation and ended by presenting**

Nell with a lovely hand-embroidered Irish linen tablecloth. Bobby Hendren presented each of us a gift and then the chorus stood and sang, "Will Ye No Come Back Again?" We felt a bit flattered for this was the song the Capetown Africans sang to the king and queen as their ship sailed away from the harbor.

All of us were in tears as the meeting ended. Young and old were sobbing as if their hearts would break. We clung to each other, reluctant to accept the fact that we had to part. It was long after midnight when we said goodnight to the Hunter family and went to our bed, but we arose early next morning for breakfast, and when we arrived at the airport bus station in Donegal Square we found a company of saints awaiting us. I could name every one of them, but I must limit myself to a special tribute to Mary Hendren who, for thirty years, has faithfully written to us and kept us informed by letters, newspapers and books, of the changing fortunes of the saints in these troublous times.

When we arrived back at Ringway Air Terminal in Manchester, we soon transferred to the rail station to board the train for Morley, near the great industrial city of Leeds, in Yorkshire. The train trip through the hills was beautiful. Gray stone fences centuries old climbed up the steeps. Patches of snow lingered in the upper valleys. Rushing streams tumbled under old stone bridges. The train went through a long tunnel and emerged at Morley.

3. Debates at Home and Fellowship Abroad

More of England and then Home Again

Contents

Our stay in Yorkshire was memorable for many reasons. For one thing we were privileged to stay in the home of Fred and Hilda Hardy and their charming daughter Bessie. Bro. Hardy was a plumber and contractor and had created a lovely house called "Windyridge" out of an antique stone dwelling. I spoke five times at Morley with increasing crowds each night, and once at Ardsley and Dewsbury. The brethren seemed greatly uplifted and my own spirits soared. Bro. Hardy owned an automobile and resolved to show us as much of Yorkshire as possible, including the seven-hilled city of Morley, the home of great woolen mills.

Some areas still remain engraved in my memory. The great city of Leeds with its famous university, renowned modern hospital, the unique city hall, and the huge apartment building spread over several city blocks and erected in a perfect and unbroken circle. The quaint old city of York, looking like a throwback to the days of Charles Dickens. We visited York Minster with its crypts in the floor containing the dust of English nobility, and the days of Roman occupation in the first century. The lovely city of Harrogate, famous spa and health resort, where the crystal clear mineral waters run though the bath houses, and along the valley by the promenade where the wealthy walk.

The age-old city of Knaresborough, clinging precariously to the slopes rising above the River Nidd, and looking like an illustration from a Mother Goose book. This was the traditional home of "Mother Shipton" who was credited with prophesying the advent of automobiles, planes and other modern developments centuries ago. One day, through the kindness of Bro. Fred Sugden, who worked in a woolen mill, we were permitted to go through and observe the processing from the time the wool was received until the cloth came off in huge rolls bound for export to the United States. The week sped by all too quickly and we had to depart for Warwickshire before we were ready to go. We will never forget the Hardy, McDonald, Sugden, Sykes and Baines families, nor shall I forget Geoffrey Lodge, the astute and capable young brother who later married Bessie Hardy.

When we arrived in Birmingham, Friday, April 18, the signs of the fearful devastation wrought by Nazi bombers were everywhere evident. The Summerlane meetinghouse had been blasted into fragments one Saturday night and the brethren with whom I was to labor were using an old mess hall purchased from the government and hauled to their site. We were given hospitality in the home of Bro. Fred Day, one of the elders, and also one of the gentlest and humblest men I have ever met. Scholarly and informed, he was one of the most qualified Bible teachers with whom I have ever been associated.

On Saturday, the brethren had arranged a welcome meeting, preceded by a 4:00 o'clock tea, to which all of the congregations in the area were invited. Instead of one returning thanks when we were all seated, the brethren sang a thanksgiving hymn in unison. Bro. Earl Stuckenbruck and wife, who were enroute to Tubingen, Germany, were in Birmingham, and came out to meet me. His father was a minister of the Disciples of Christ congregation in Topeka, Kansas, where I finished high school. The Stuckenbrucks were the first Americans we had met on our tour and the "Yankee twang"

with its midwestern accent sounded good to our ears.

On Saturday afternoon I was taken to the home of John McCartney, who was to be 93 years old the following Wednesday. He lived contemporary with David King, the leader of the reform movement in England for forty years. He was a boy of twelve when news reached England of the death of Alexander Campbell. I had long read his writings and it seemed like a dream that I should be in the home of this renowned scholar. He was totally blind, but his mind was clear and lucid, and as he sat with the shawl about his shoulders, talking about the Book which had been his rod and staff, it was a little like being in the presence of one of the prophets.

From the home of Bro. McCartney we went to the cemetery where the body of David King lies buried. I had already read the large book titled "Memoir of David King" by his wife Louise, and knew that the Cause had been launched in Birmingham through his efforts coupled with those of J. B. Rotherham. From a congregation of eleven members which they planted, the community of saints grew to number hundreds. In some ways David King excelled Alexander Campbell and it is a tragedy that his work is so little known in the United States. Carved upon the simple stone erected over his resting-place are these words: "rejecting all human creeds, He pleaded that the Teaching of Christ and His Apostles is the only Divinely authorized and all-sufficient Way of Salvation and basis of Christian Union. He was a good man. Mighty in the Scriptures. Ask for the Old Paths and walk therein."

Warwickshire fairly crawls with literary greatness. On our way to Leicester to speak we visited Stratford-on-Avon. The home of William Shakespeare looked just as it had been pictured in my high school English Literature textbook. I read with interest the original manuscripts of some of his plays exhibited upstairs. In an adjoining room, where he was born, many of the world's great have scratched their names in the

glass of the old Tudor windowpanes. Easily identified were the autographs of William Makepeace Thackeray, Sir Walter Scott, and John Barrymore. Speaking of Scott reminds me that as we left Stratford we went to Kenilworth to visit the castle tower featured in his novel named after the town.

At Coventry we saw the frightful havoc wreaked by the German Luftwaffe. The city grew from a Benedictine monastery established in 1043 by the famous Lady Godiva and her husband. Hitler resolved to wipe it from the earth. In two months of insane bombing the center of the city was devastated and 70,000 homes were utterly destroyed or severely damaged. The 14th century St. Michael's Cathedral was blasted into oblivion except for the 303-foot steeple which remained like a lone finger pointing toward the heavens.

The little body of brethren in Leicester met in a council schoolroom. They had recently left the large congregation affiliated with the British Cooperation for conscience' sake. We had a good audience present and a grand spirit of fellowship was apparent. The following day we drove through Sherwood Forest, the one-time haunt of Robin Hood and his merry men on our way to Loughborough where I was to speak. We stayed with Basil and Elizabeth Jaynes who were tenants working on the great Sir Julian Hall estate, embracing several thousand acres. A great many German prisoners were under guard on the estate sorting and cleaning potatoes for the market. Many of them were young and looked like anything but Nazi supermen. They were forced to wear a diamond-shaped patch of another color on the back of their drab jackets and trousers to permit immediate identification and to provide against escape. They were hungry for news of what was transpiring in the world and eagerly snatched up every bit of stray newspaper, which some of them could read.

At East Kirkby, on Wednesday night, I encountered the first serious opposition I had experienced. The British brethren,

with very few exceptions, are vigorously against the idea of bearing arms in time of war, under any circumstances. Some of the older ones endured imprisonment and even physical torture for their convictions during World War One. So pronounced was the feeling at East Kirkby during World War Two that it was made a test of fellowship. The brethren refused to pass the Lord's Supper to those who were in uniform. American soldiers who attended were deliberately barred from the privilege of communing in the body and blood of the Lord.

Since I regarded war as an evil, and not necessarily a sin, I had written my book *Fighting Christians* a number of years before. In it I took up one by one the scriptural deductions affirmed by the brethren who were opposed to war and dealt with them. Thinking to prejudice the British brethren against me before my arrival certain ones in the United States had mailed several copies of my book to what they considered strategic areas. The brethren knew I was not a political pacifist. The question period following my message was without incident, but following dismissal several of the brethren gathered around me and walled me in, demanding how I could be in the fellowship of those trained to kill. It reminded me of how things are done in the United States and turned out to be an interesting engagement with some of the most militant pacifists I have ever met. Since I made no test of fellowship out of their opinion it was not nearly so tense for me as for them. I could receive and love them without their changing. But the danger of making tests of fellowship out of personal deductions from the scriptures was borne home to me as I had never seen it before.

After a final meeting in Birmingham we returned to London to spend more than a week with the Scott family before embarking on the Queen Elizabeth for home. It was a time literally crammed with interest, but would require too much time and space to describe. On Sunday, April 27, there were 24 present for the breaking of bread in this great city of ten million souls. In the evening Bro. Scott asked me if I would be willing to

engage in a question forum after the gospel meeting. Although I was surprised at the request, I agreed to do so. Later I learned that two or three in the congregation had raised objections to allowing me to speak because of my position as to bearing arms in international conflict. The forum was a good one and the contention quite sharp at times, although good order predominated. Some were more dogmatic than others and the questioners disagreed among themselves, but the session helped clear the air. I came away with a sense of deep appreciation for the brethren, even those who disagreed with me.

We sailed from Southampton on Saturday, May 3, and arrived back in St. Louis on May 10, my thirty-ninth birthday. Our eager hearts were filled to overflowing to see the children well and hearty and doing well in school. In the ensuing weeks scores of letters came from those whom we had met and as we replied to them our hearts drifted back across the ocean and in memory we lived again with those who were so dear unto us. As I write this thirty years have passed into history since we first set foot in Great Britain, but we still hear from several of those whom we met. We would like to hear from all of them.

Almost at once my services were in demand by congregations which wanted to hear of our trip and see the amateur movies we had made of the entire time. I resumed my weekly radio broadcast which had been temporarily placed in the efficient hands of Hershel Ottwell after my 171st consecutive message. Too, we had to begin distribution of the first volume of the Bible Commentary by Brother Zerr which we had published under our imprint. It sold for $4.00 per copy, bound in cloth and stamped in gold.

Our paper *Mission Messenger*, now almost ten years old, was full of reports of congregations being planted, new meetinghouses being erected, and people being immersed into Christ. Every issue contained letters from abroad and it seemed as if God was smiling upon the efforts of "the brotherhood." It

never entered our minds that we were exclusivists forming a divisive party. We were the one body for which Jesus had died. It was a propitious season for resuming the debates with Brother Brewer who had suggested that we hold an open discussion upon every Christian college campus. Inasmuch as he was on the staff of Harding College at Searcy, Arkansas, he suggested it as the best place for our third encounter.

On October 20, 1947, I wrote this genial "brother in error" and asked him to select a date. I was ready when he was. In his reply he said: "I suppose you keep up with the papers and, if you do, you realize that there is a considerable interest now aroused over a question among ourselves. This is the old question of whether or not a church should contribute to a school. You know my position, and this is the position held by the vast majority of my brethren. However, the *Bible Banner* group has been seeking to destroy me for some years and they thought they would get me committed to an issue on which none of the schools or orphan homes or papers would agree with me, and then they would have me branded as a disloyal, unfair man. They have failed in this and it is about to turn the other way. The *Bible Banner* is about to find itself standing alone on this point except for the sympathy they get from the Sommers. They are inconsistent or they would go over to the Sommers or else drop the point they are making an ado about. Right now we have a challenge out to them and it is possible that Roy Cogdill will finally be urged to meet me in debate. If that happens, I'll have him as an opponent instead of you; and when the debate is over, you can probably take his arguments and debate with me or some other man on our side.

"At any rate, this is the status of the case now and I am not prepared to tell you that you and I can have a debate soon. If this other debate fails to develop, then we may get Harding to invite our debate and we can move it to Memphis where we will have a big auditorium. We shall have to wait, however, for a while before we pursue this matter any further. With all good

wishes, I am faithfully yours, — *G. C. Brewer.*"

I never debated Bro. Brewer again. The trouble which was fomenting in the ranks of those with whom he was directly affiliated continued to grow until eventually another major cleavage occurred and the restoration movement was disgraced by another unnecessary division. Today in some cities there are representatives of both sides meeting and challenging one another for debate. One side refers to the other as "liberals" while they think of themselves as "conservatives." The fact is that neither group is the body of Christ in its fulness and both are simply factions which cannot get along with each other.

In January of 1948 we had 85 students from ten states enrolled in the study of the Word in Saint Louis. It was a great learning experience and we explored the Bible with a keen sense of desire for knowing more about the divine revelation. For six weeks we studied every day and held three night sessions of two hours each. We drew so close together that we wept when the time came to bid one another farewell.

4. The Beginnings of Change

Life Begins at 40

Contents

Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote in his *Journal* in 1847: "We do not live an equal life, but one of contrasts and patchwork, now a little joy, then a sorrow, now a sin, then a generous or brave action." A calendar consists of twelve pages and every four weeks one of them is torn off and wadded up and tossed in the wastebasket. Each of these discarded pages represents a segment of existence, but what has happened to one during its tenure cannot be carelessly discarded seeing that it has been woven into the warp and woof of the pattern of memory by the slamming batten of experience on the loom of life.

Every year that passes accumulates its own assortment of pleasure and pain, of tears and laughter. The ship of life cannot sail for fifty-two weeks in perpetual sunshine. It was that way with 1948 during which I reached my fortieth birthday. The year began as usual with a packed house in Saint Louis on New Year's Eve. It was a time of spiritual enrichment, of the manifestation of a fellowship so precious that when the stroke of midnight signalled the beginning of a new year ushered in with prayer many were reluctant to leave. We clung to one another as a huddle of strangers and pilgrims in a foreign land. The songs we sang were hymns about a home none of us had ever seen, but the tolling of the bells at midnight told us that we were nearer to it than we had ever been before.

In March I went to California for a meeting of three weeks' duration in the new meetinghouse at Compton. I took advantage of the opportunity to speak two nights in Oakland where the saints met in the home of George Robinson, which was surrounded by the campus of the great university. I also spent one night each with the saints in Pomona, Riverside, and West Riverside. I was especially anxious to visit the latter place for several reasons. While there were a few others in the little group of brethren, the majority were members of the Stone and Fiscus families. The latter family had worked its way westward from Indiana, but the Stone family migrated from the Missouri Ozarks. They had purchased a small "ranch" which was well irrigated and all of the married children erected their homes in a small domain over which the aged father and mother exercised a kind of patriarchal sway. It was always a blessing to be associated with them in their kind of isolated splendor. But I was just as eager to meet the little colony of Armenian refugees, a good many of whom I had baptized on a previous visit.

During World War I the Turks, encouraged by the withdrawal of Russian troops from Armenia due to the Bolshevik Revolution, began a reign of terror in Armenia which shocked the world. Whole cities and villages were literally destroyed. The men were murdered, the women raped, and the houses reduced to smoking ruins and heaps of ashes. Before it was all over 800,000 corpses littered the land, most of them shot down or decapitated with the sword, although many perished from hunger and privation. Some of them froze to death in thickets, their bodies becoming food for wild animals.

Those who finally made their way to Riverside, California, had formerly lived in the village of Boethos, near Musa Dagh (the mount of Moses) and when word reached them of the approach of the Turks they fled to the mountains taking with them only what they could hastily tie into a bundle and carry on their backs. After many days and nights when they held the children close to their bodies to keep them from freezing, their

supply of food began to run out and they were forced to become scavengers of the forest, eating bark and roots. When it appeared that all hope was gone and they were composing themselves for death they saw a French ship steaming into the disputed waters and they were rescued. In a frenzy of weeping they threw themselves onto the deck and kissed the planks in gratitude.

For some reason, during my meeting at West Riverside, a number of the Armenians began to attend. Since the older ones could not understand English, those who could asked if I would hold a special meeting with an interpreter for the elderly after the close of the regular meeting each night. Rose Philian, a devout Christian, stood by my side and interpreted. Soon several of the Armenian families expressed a desire to be baptized, but the greatest joy came when Grandfather and Grandmother Egarian reached the decision. It was these two, now grown old, who had kept the little band together and given them heart when they wanted to take their lives rather than fall into the hands of the Turks.

When the aged patriarch stood before the members of the Armenian colony and their friends, I said to Rose, "Ask him if he truly believes that Jesus is the one of whom the prophets spoke, and God's Son." In reply he faced his neighbors and spoke at some length in Armenian. I was anxious to know what he was saying, and I can remember the words of the translator as if I had heard them this morning. "He say, I believe Jesus Son of God, that born of virgin, that he die on cross for his sin, and that he buried and raised again third day. He also say Jesus is coming again, and he will see him, and Jesus will take him and he will be with Jesus." When I led the aged man into the water the interpreter stood close and told him what I said. I think I have never seen before or since such weeping for joy as when all surged forward to embrace the old brother and his companion.

It was a great experience to see the Armenian saints again

and to eat shish kebab made of lamb and other ingredients. They went all out with their cuisine and I ate a lot of things I could neither spell nor describe. The one thing that really interested me was to talk with them about their traditions related to Noah's ark which had landed on a mountain not too far from where they had been born and grew up.

Some interesting things happened at Compton where I baptized twenty persons, one of whom was Robert T. Hartmann. Bob was a reporter for the *Los Angeles Times* who later became head of the *Times* bureau in Rome and finally chief of the Washington Bureau. It was here he became acquainted with Senator Gerald Ford from Michigan and when the latter became president of the United States, Bob became his favorite speechwriter. He married Roberta Sankey with whose parents I was staying in North Long Beach and I came to know him well.

When I baptized him he agreed to become a writer for *Mission Messenger*. His articles were both powerful and provocative. The first one titled "The Essence of Faith" appeared in the issue for May 1948. It was followed by such pieces as "Suffer Little Children" and "Words to Live By." Finally, after eight months of such varied productions it was decided he would do a regular column called "Views of the News." It began in January 1949 with a story of how Sohn Ryang Won, a Korean Christian, adopted into his family the 24-year-old Communist leader who had slain his two sons. The story went on to tell how Sohn converted the young murderer and his whole family to Christ.

For two years Brother Hartmann furnished an article each month until his promotion and transfer increased his responsibilities. His final article bore the title, "Was Peter in Rome?" I got a bang out of his articles. He had not grown up in the background of our party and he wrote what he thought with a kind of fearless disregard for criticism or consequences. He had a kind of journalistic honesty not too characteristic of a lot

of the brethren.

Almost a year before I went to Compton, James Lovell, editor of *West Coast Christian* wrote me that, in spite of our differences, he thought I would be glad to see him at one of my meetings. We engaged in a brief period of correspondence and discussed some areas of divergency. Neither of us conceded an inch, but it was all in good humor. There was no way of making him angry. When I arrived in Southern California I called him and invited him to visit my meeting and he countered by asking me to a top-level conference at Pepperdine College. I invited J. B. Ruth, one of the elders, to accompany me. When we arrived at the Administration Building we met with Hugh Tiner, the president; Ralph Wilburn of the Bible Department; Wade Ruby of the English Department; Dean Pullias and Jimmie Lovell.

In spite of the criticism I had leveled at the school and its policies, our meeting was conducted with proper decorum. I think George Pepperdine would have approved of the nature of our confrontation. We were reared in the same partisan background and I knew him when he went to Denver from Parsons, Kansas, where I preached for several years with members of his family always in the audience.

I suggested that, in the interest of better relationships, Brother Lovell print three articles in his paper presenting my point of view, while I would present the same number of articles written by one of the faculty members in *Mission Messenger*. It was agreed this would be a good thing but it never came to pass. Instead, a shake-up occurred, and before too long the president, dean and head of the Bible Department were all gone. Ralph G. Wilburn, who was probably the only real theologian in the group, in the classical sense, went with the Disciples of Christ, where he began teaching at Lexington Theological Seminary. He was selected as a member of the Panel of Scholars which contributed to the restructure program of the Disciples, and gravitated to the Department of Higher Education in Chapman

College at Orange, California.

On September 5, 1948, I began a series of meetings in Windsor, Ontario, Canada, which lasted for two weeks. It was an especially pleasurable experience since most of the members were from Scotland and England and I had visited their home congregations abroad. There were two elders— Adam Bruce from the Slamannan District of Scotland, and William Horrocks from Albert Street congregation in Wigan, England. I stayed with the latter and it was an unforgettable experience. My work opened up a period of endeavors which lasted over a period of several years and resulted in some unique experiences as well as in some outstanding friendships.

One day before I went to Canada I was visited in Saint Louis by the three principal instructors of Midwestern School of Evangelism, located in Ottumwa, Iowa. Donald G. Hunt, Burton W. Barber and James McMorrow drove all the way to deliver to me a personal challenge to debate Burton Barber on the subject of instrumental music at the school. I felt no particular inclination to take time out from a busy life for such a discussion but they were insistent. Hershel Ottwell accompanied me to Ottumwa, and we debated at the school on the nights of October 11, 12, 13. On the final night, after the discussion ended, the five of us met in an upper room and prayed that God would overcome our differences and use our mistakes to His glory. The debate had been serious and pointed, but without a single untoward incident or expression of partisan hostility.

Tragedy struck for us shortly afterwards. Nell's father and mother were returning from an evening meeting at Fredericktown, Missouri, when their automobile was hit by a man who was intoxicated. Her mother was thrown from the car by the impact and her body dragged along until the car turned over. She was taken to Bonne Terre where the skill of the physicians and surgeons saved her and started her on the long, slow road to recovery. On the afternoon of December 13 she was

in good spirits when a well-meaning nurse massaged her arm because of soreness. A blood clot was loosened and found its way to the heart. In a few minutes she was gone.

I was at Carrollton, Missouri, in a meeting, when Nell called me and relayed to me the sad news. As soon as I finished the meeting that night I started home. On the third day following I conducted the service of memorial before a large audience. My "second mother" was beloved by hundreds. Nell's father was mayor of the city, to which he was elected for several terms, and the family had earned the respect of the whole community. But it came home to me then what a difference there is in a home when the wife and mother is gone. The Christmas season which had always been one of joy and brightness became a kind of weary experience through which we stumbled with our eyes more often filled with tears than with stars.

In the year that was hastening to a close Brother Zerr had completed the second volume of his commentary which we published. Because we had not disposed of enough of the first one to pay for the second, the cumulative effect of the costs became too much and it appeared that we might have to delay work on the third volume until the other two were paid for. Fortunately for the cause, F. R. Bailey of Chillicothe, Missouri agreed to guarantee the cost of production to the printers so we could proceed on schedule. Eventually we brought out three thousand sets containing six books each, a total of 18,000 volumes, at a cost of about $35,000, not including packaging and postal costs. We sold all of the books.

It was during this year my book *A Clean Church* **was published. I had been thinking about it by day and dreaming about it by night until one afternoon I could no longer stifle the urge to write. I sat down at the dining-table and started. I wrote all afternoon, all night, and until almost noon the next day, driven by an inner compulsion which would not allow me to stop. I was afraid that if I slept the fountain might be turned off**

and not flow again. When I arose from my chair I could hardly walk, but before me lay a stack of pages representing a complete book. I do not recall making any changes when I typed it up. I learned that brain children are like physical children. They must be conceived before they are brought to the delivery room, but once the time has come, they will be born. I suspect that having the first child is most difficult. I never again wrote another major book as I did that one.

In 1948 we also began an outreach program. Brother Leonard Bilyeu opened up his lovely home in the Florissant Valley for a weekly study of the Word. In three months 55 different persons representing all varieties of religious thought had participated. Encouraged by this I secured the conference room of the public library at Kirkwood and launched a study which was surprisingly well attended. I was not alone in this endeavor, for many brethren, old and young, were catching the vision that the post-war world was seeking for a spiritual foundation. As the year drew to a close I wrote, "The quickest way to lose your life is to try and hold it; the best way to gain your life is to lose it for Jesus' sake."

4. The Beginnings of Change

The Call of the South

Contents

The year of 1949 was an eventful one historically and personally. On January 20, Harry S. Truman from Missouri was sworn in as President, with Alben W. Barkley as his vice-president. They had been elected November 2 in a stunning upset victory over Thomas E. Dewey and Earl Warren. On April 4 the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was sworn into being, and on April 14 the German war crimes trial was ended with the conviction of 19 of 21 former Nazi officials.

We began by dropping the word "Missouri" from the name of the paper. It had long since ceased to be merely a journal recording news from our state and henceforth would be known as *Mission Messenger*. We coined the slogan "The paper with a mission and a message." We signalled the change by introducing open forums upon such subjects as "The Work of Women in the Church," and "Marriage and Divorce." I published the divergent views in articles and letters exactly as they were written and without editing. It was a new day for fairness and apparently the people liked it. In ninety days we received a thousand new subscriptions. Our writers demonstrated a considerable amount of "unity in diversity," especially since most of them denied there was such a thing.

I rather suspect the year marked a new kind of "high" for our particular segment of the restoration movement. This was

reflected in the attendance and enthusiasm shown in the "annual meetings" which had long been a part of our life. Some of these were anniversary gatherings marking the date the congregation had been planted. Others, such as the Labor Day meeting at Hammond, Illinois, were scheduled to take advantage of the freedom from work on holidays. There were 256 at the 39th anniversary meeting at Bonne Terre, Missouri, June 12; 330 at Hartford, Illinois, June 26; 200 at Sullivan, Illinois, July 17; 350 at Richmond, Missouri, July 24; and 452 at Hammond, Illinois, September 5. The latter embraced brethren from 51 congregations in 8 states.

A part of the attendance was due to the presence among us of Albert Winstanley from England. Albert and Jean, with their little son David, a babe in arms, arrived in New York on the liner Queen Mary, on June 20. Nell and her elder sister Nova went to New York to accompany them to Saint Louis, where the stifling heat of the midwest was almost too much for them. Although still a young man, Albert was an excellent student of God's Word, clear and lucid in his thinking, and articulate in his presentation. He visited scores of congregations with Hershel Ottwell as his guide and travel companion. They covered many states. Wherever Albert went, God used him in a marvelous manner and the six months he spent among us seemed to fly.

In September I returned to Windsor, Ontario, for a Bible Study which I taught every night with an average of more than sixty in attendance. On Sunday I spoke to the edification of the saints gathered for the breaking of the bread, and that night proclaimed the good news in the gospel meeting. It was during the study of the Word that I met William Keenan, an atheist and former Communist organizer. He came to my meeting through the influence of a former alcoholic, now a fellow-member of Alcoholics Anonymous. After three nights of attendance at my class they asked me if I could come and talk with them the following day.

I went at 9:00 a.m., and was ushered into the drab quarters, a "bachelor pad" with sparse furnishings. We sat down in the kitchen with its single naked light bulb hanging from the ceiling. There were just three battered chairs and we pulled them up to the table with its chipped enamel top. As we talked an occasional mouse made a foray across the floor to pick up a crumb, dashing back to safety when someone shuffled his feet. I watched a huge cockroach crawling around on a rickety cabinet.

When I requested the privilege to pray the two former alcoholics and I bowed our heads, while the cold autumn rain coursed its way in rivulets down the outside of the unwashed window-panes. I asked William Keenan to tell me where he was and how he had arrived there. It was like opening the flood-gates to allow a long pent-up river of feelings to surge through. He talked for three hours while drinking cup after cup of strong coffee. I sipped a little of it and it tasted like I think varnish remover might taste. At times during the narrative his nervous hands shook until he had to use both of them to lift the cup to his lips.

As a boy he was turned from the Christian faith by a preacher in the Established Church, whom he idolized, and who had formed a boys' club which was the height of his joy in the small English town where he lived. He had resolved to grow up and become a clergyman and devote his life to helping underprivileged children when he discovered that the man he revered was a homosexual and the boys' club was a cover for dealing in seduction. The night after the rector made an indecent proposal to him, he shook and cried all night. The next morning when he tried to tell his quarreling parents who were heading for a divorce they only berated and abused him verbally.

He ran off and ended up in an English city where he was taken into the home of a Communist labor infiltrator. Here he was shown kindness and love. He was treated daily to the idea

that religion was a means by which the wealthy exploiters enslaved the sweating masses for their own profit. The term *God* became a dirty word to his mind. God was the designation of an ogre conjured up in primitive minds. When he was sent to Moscow he already hated God and regarded the Christian faith as a retreat from reality by weak persons. He was trained as an infiltrator of youth groups in the English speaking world, but after several years began to "hit the bottle." He became useless to Moscow and they kicked him out, convinced he would end up in a drunkard's grave. But he had gone to Alcoholics Anonymous and found understanding and compassion, and his friend had brought him to my meetings where we were friendly and kind to him.

What I said that night made sense if there was a God. If not, it was merely a house of straw. I had listened for three hours without interruption. At one o'clock I began the real struggle for the soul of a desperate and destitute man. The minutes ticked away while the rain lessened in force. Three more hours passed, and at four o'clock he said, "That's enough. I believe that God is, and that Jesus Christ is His Son." Just as he said it, the sun broke through for the first time that day and cast a shaft of light across the dingy table where we had been sitting for seven hours. That night I baptized him into the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

When I arrived back home in Saint Louis there was a letter written on lined notepaper asking if I would come for a series of meetings in Beech Grove, a little Arkansas village clustered around a cotton gin a few miles from Paragould. I assumed that it resulted from my reply to a letter received in March from Herbert Johnson, a humble farmer near Beech Grove. He wrote to encourage me to continue my opposition to the one-man hireling ministry system which was foisting a special clergy caste upon the congregations. I agreed to go to Beech Grove for a meeting in July 1950, if God willed.

In the December 22 issue of *Gospel Advocate*, John Allan Hudson unleashed a four-column blast against me in an article titled "The Divisive Leadership of W. Carl Ketcherside." In it he used such terms as "Carl's diocese" and "archbishopric." He spoke of my cantankerous spirit and referred to accusations made against me by members of the Sommer family and by Fred Fenton, who once wrote for *Mission Messenger* and was very complimentary of my efforts, until he dropped out to start a short-lived periodical of his own called *Radiant Truth*. Brother Hudson made dire predictions of my rising power and influence, and warned that if the brethren listened there would be great changes come about in the churches.

I was amazed when I read the article, not only by its appearance, but by its harsh and caustic tone. I immediately wrote B. C. Goodpasture, the editor, and asked for space to reply to the personal attack upon my motives and integrity. After a number of days had gone by I received a curt reply consisting of four lines in which Brother Goodpasture said that he did not think an article from me would contribute to the peace or well-being of the brotherhood. To this day I cannot figure why Brother Hudson reacted so bitterly in print in an attempt to destroy me unless it was because the British brethren had ignored his letters generally circulated among them urging them not to hear me. Their willingness to hear for themselves, coupled with the coming of Brother Winstanley, was probably more than our brother could take.

As the year of 1949 drew to a close we had just concluded a six-weeks Bible Study on December 6, which brought together capable students from ten states. Many of these were young, being just out of high school, but a goodly number were older men seeking to improve their knowledge so they might render better service as elders of their congregations. The study was greatly enhanced by the presence of Brother Winstanley who contributed much to our spiritual knowledge as well as to our understanding of the work of the brethren in Great Britain. Our

hearts were sad as the time drew near for the departure of this little family. Nell and I were especially touched because they had made their home with us. It had been good to have a baby in the house once more.

On Saturday night, December 24, we had a farewell gathering for them. The next day, Christmas, Albert spoke in the morning for the congregation on Manchester Avenue. That night he addressed the Lillian Avenue congregation for the last time. The next day they left us but not before Albert had agreed to contribute an article each month under the heading "As Others See You." His discussion of his impressions of America and of the congregations he visited provided interesting reading for those who had come to love him for his work's sake. Long after he had gone to labor in Tunbridge Wells and Ikeston, the congregations over here continued to pray for him by name. He had drawn us close to those of like precious faith in Great Britain "whom having not seen we loved."

Early in 1950, while in Indiana, I went to the office of the *American Christian Review*, **to discuss our differences with Allen R. Sommer, and Bessie, his sister. Our visit was amicable and gracious, despite the rifts which had occurred in the past. The same afternoon I went to Butler University for a talk with some of the faculty members. I was received in a spirit of courtesy and kindness.**

Meanwhile in Arkansas the exact opposite attitude was being manifested toward the little congregation at Beech Grove. When word of the forthcoming meeting was released the machinery of opposition went into high gear. There were two congregations in Paragould, the county seat. The one at Second and Walnut had J. A. McNutt as minister, the one at Seventh and Mueller had Emmett Smith. George W. DeHoff of Murfreesboro, Tennessee, was in a meeting in Paragould when the announcement of my coming was made. He immediately launched an attack against Beech Grove from the pulpit,

demanding that they cancel their arrangement with me forthwith.

When the brethren at Beech Grove declined to do this it was decided to bring in reinforcements, and a call was made to Harbert Hooker at Poplar Bluff, Missouri, who had several times held meetings at Beech Grove and was generally well liked. Brother Hooker did not even consult the brethren as to whether they wanted him to come. One of the leaders at Beech Grove found a note in his rural mailbox that Brother Hooker would speak at Beech Grove the next Sunday afternoon and wanted all the members present. It was announced on Sunday morning and all of the members went. Brother Hooker delivered a talk on supporting preachers, then asked everyone to leave except the Beech Grove members.

He told of his deep regret at learning that the brethren were making the saddest mistake of their career in bringing in the worst extremist in the whole United States. He said I was so opposed to women speaking in the church that when a woman wanted to make a confession of faith we took her out on the front porch of our meetinghouses. The brethren asked him if he would sign a statement to that effect so they could go to Saint Louis and investigate. He refused and told them he was not signing anything, but they would be sorry if they did not listen to him. He then shook the dust off his feet and departed.

Two weeks later a preacher showed up on Sunday morning and announced he had been sent to warn the brethren not to go through with their plans for me to come. He warned them I was so liberal I believed in women preachers. After the meeting they "collared him" and told him that either he or Brother Hooker was guilty of falsehood and perhaps both were. He excused himself and fled the scene, and never returned.

Sterl Watson then entered the fray by writing a booklet filled with diatribe under the silly title "Ketcherside and

Killebrew Keeled." Fred Killebrew was then working with a small congregation in Senath, Missouri, after having renounced the clergy system while living in Tennessee. It was the intention of Brother Watson to wipe Fred and myself off the map with one swipe. Amazingly, Dr. James D. Bales sent out an endorsement of the book urging all to read it. Actually, it was so wild that we immediately recognized that if we could get it into the hands of brethren it would do more good than anything we could write or say.

Fred Killebrew began to advertise the books and offer them free in his meetings. It was so effective that when he went to Sterl to get a couple of hundred additional copies he refused to let him have them or to tell him where he might secure them.

4. The Beginnings of Change

Arkansas Antics

Contents

I feel certain that many of my readers will be inclined to sit in judgment upon me for spending so much time detailing events surrounding one little semi-rural congregation in Arkansas. If I need to justify my own conscience I can do so by recalling that it is in such places the Spirit always works to turn the tide of sectarianism. It cannot be done initially in large metropolitan areas where pride and tradition, those twin evils which oppose all reformation, have entrenched themselves. No one in the restoration movement of which we are heirs, who remembers Washington, Pennsylvania, or Cane Ridge, Kentucky, should ever "despise the day of small things."

The struggle of men to free themselves from the encroachment of a System seeking to destroy their freedom needs to be chronicled so that future generations basking in the warm sun of liberty will not forget the price that was paid to drive the ominous clouds away. And the names of those who warred upon one side or the other need to be engraved on the pillars of history since movements are but men in action. Before I went to Beech Grove, Arkansas, there had gradually developed a kind of super-church mentality which tended to elevate to dominance large congregations whose preachers and elders were promoters and who could control rural congregations and use them as feeder units to enhance their own image.

One of the congregations in Paragould had actually proposed to all of the rural and village churches in the county that they send their finances in to it, and allow them to arrange for a stable of preachers who could be assigned to various places and paid for from the central fund. The argument was used that since the Paragould congregation had elders and many of the smaller places did not, these elders could oversee the preachers and assure that country congregations would hear "better preaching." It is to the eternal credit of the rural congregations that they rejected this blatant attempt to take over their rights and violate their autonomy.

But what a proposed centralized presbytery could not accomplish was then attempted through "area preacher meetings." In such monthly gatherings needs were discussed, plans were devised, and machinery set up to accomplish what a professional clergy wanted to see done. Smaller congregations without preachers on their payroll had no representation. They did not know of the plans until they were already being carried out and they received a letter or visit from someone asking them to send finances to help "bear the burden." Such little places had to submit or be ostracized and castigated for refusal to cooperate in "the work of the Lord."

When W. L. Otty, who lived in Indianapolis, Indiana, heard that I was going to Beech Grove he fired off a letter to the church in Paragould to tell them how to handle the matter. He advised his brethren to assault the ramparts and go in a body to Beech Grove each night. As soon as I finished my message they were to arise and take over and hold another meeting in which they could defeat anything I said. He also recommended that the Paragould brethren publicly withdraw from the two brethren at Beech Grove who had first suggested to the congregation to have me come. By some quirk of the mail service his letter was delivered to the church in Beech Grove instead of to the one in Paragould. One of the brothers whose exclusion was recommended stood up and read it publicly to the saints.

In desperation, the preachers published a notice in *Firm Foundation* at Austin, Texas, under the heading "Ketcherside Invades the South." It called upon all preachers and members everywhere not to give aid or comfort to the brethren at Beech Grove until they repented of the grievous sin of inviting me to speak to them and renounced me and what I advocated. It was signed by J. A. McNutt and Emmet Smith, among others.

As soon as the notice appeared preachers began to enter the fray. Some called long distance. Others drove to Beech Grove. All frantically urged the brethren to cancel the work before it was too late. Sinclair Slatton, Joe Blue, George DeHoff, G. C. Brewer, W. Curtis Porter, and James D. Bales, were but a few of those who injected themselves into the business of the congregation and vainly tried their hand. The more pressure that was brought to bear from the outside the more determined did the little group become not to be shoved around.

It was about this time I began receiving crank letters from some of the brethren in Paragould. A few of them contained overt threats and implied I might even suffer bodily injury. One said if I did not cancel the meeting and hurry up about it a group of men from all over that section would meet me as "a welcoming committee" and make it so hot for me I would wish I had never come. I sent the letters to the brethren at Beech Grove who called me by telephone to say that it was they who invited me to come and only they had the right to invite me not to come. They told me to come on and pay no attention to letters from the congregations at Paragould or Commissary.

On Saturday, July 15, I went to Beech Grove with Allen Phillips and his good family. They had lived in the vicinity of Lafe, Arkansas, for a number of years and knew most of the saints at Beech Grove. They took their vacation to go with me to help in the meeting and they were a real strength and blessing. I went to the home of Herbert and Ruby Johnson where I was to stay. I have never found the hospitality which they extended to

me surpassed. I had not been there an hour until brothers and sisters began to drive in from all around. None of them had ever seen me and they had come to "size me up." They were sincere, humble and unpretentious. It was easy for me to love them every one.

We began the next day under auspicious circumstances. There was a large crowd in the morning and at night the building was filled. The attention was perfect in spite of the heat. On the final night the audience overflowed the building and many could not get in. Everyone came except the preachers. They were conspicuous by their very absence. Always before they rallied to a "big meeting" and were on the front seats. Now they had resolved to lie low and allow me to hold the meeting and after it had all "blown over" they would move back in and straighten the congregation out. When I announced that I would return in six months and conduct a study of the Word for two weeks, open to all in the area, it began to dawn upon them that a boycott would no more serve their purpose than open attack.

The day our meeting began the church in Paragould started one with E. R. Harper, of Abilene, Texas. It was calculated to keep their members away. On the first Sunday morning Brother Harper went on the air and made an attack upon Beech Grove and upon me personally. The next day three of us went in to the station, met with the manager, and requested time in which to reply. It was granted us at the regular station rate. We announced it well in advance and publicized it in the Paragould paper. It is possible we may have had the largest listening audience in the history of the station. We were particularly fortunate in that our program was aired just after the noon news broadcast.

During the week letters were mailed to every boxholder on the rural routes near Beech Grove. They were signed by the elders and preachers at Paragould and demanded that I debate W. L. Totty or Sterl Watson. I read one of the letters from the

pulpit and over the radio station and stated I had already debated both men publicly and did not consider either of them a representative man on the issues at hand. I countered by offering to meet either N. B. Hardeman, G. C. Brewer, or George Benson, as top men in the college ranks. But the meeting closed without a debate being arranged. In spite of the tension I immersed four souls in the nearby drainage ditch. Two more made public acknowledgment of wrongs and asked to be restored to the active service of the Lord.

When the time came for me to leave, all of us realized that we had simply gone through the first skirmish and the real battle lay ahead. Men like James King, Avery Cunninghan, and Herbert Johnson had been tested by fire for a year. They were ably assisted by a number of others, among whom special mention should be given to Louis Kappelman, Ellis Hots and Franklin Cunningham. Not a person left the congregation, even under pressure from relatives in Paragould. Every time I thought of the brethren as I made my way back to Saint Louis a phrase from Emerson kept ringing in my mind, "Here once the embattled farmers stood, and fired the shot heard round the world."

In August I went to Midland, Texas for a Bible Study which was held in a room at the Air Terminal where so many men had received their flight training during the war. The parachute jumping platforms and the dummy bombs were still in evidence. Our meetings were in Building T-284, which was formerly used for storing ammunition. Here where men had been taught to kill we sought to teach others how to live. From Texas I returned to Windsor, Ontario, where our series was blessed of God and several were immersed into Christ. The congregation was growing in grace and knowledge as well as in number, under the guidance of Adam Bruce and William Horrocks as shepherds. But now there were consecrated younger men such as William Brown and Robert Liles who were developing rapidly.

When I returned from Canada there was a letter urgently requesting me to come to Belfast, North Ireland. I postponed a reply for a few days in order to give thought to all the ramifications involved since I was leading a busy life. While I hesitated another letter arrived pleading that I come. I finally consented to go in February after the annual Saint Louis study and the follow-up meeting at Beech Grove. Our daughter, Sharon Sue, who had recently finished high school and was attending the Gradwohl School of Laboratory Technique agreed to edit the paper during our absence. Jerry would look after the mailing and Nell would continue to take care of the subscription and address files.

Arvel Watts, Ellis Crum and Bob Duncan taught special subjects during the Saint Louis study which reached its conclusion on December 15. Students were in attendance from Kansas, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Iowa, Colorado and Pennsylvania. We were particularly blessed in having with us two capable black brethren— Leroy Durley and William Baker.

I arrived back in Beech Grove on January 7, prepared to begin our two weeks of study the next day. The opposition had been busy during the interim. The latest prepared "bomb" was a tract by J. A. McNutt attacking O. C. Dobbs, Sr., of Birmingham, Alabama, and me. I had never met Brother Dobbs but had heard a great deal about him. He was in the first graduating class of the original Alabama Christian College when G. A. Dunn was president. He came away from the school convinced that the gravest threat to the primitive order of things was the growth of the one-man preacher-pastor system.

Brother Dobbs developed a hernia and in order to contain or control it, cut a piece of material from an old automobile tire, out of which he fashioned a truss. The hernia corrected itself with this assistance. This led him to experiment until he invented trusses for various types of hernia after which he created the Dobbs Truss Company to market his product. Since this was

prior to the time when surgery was used for the condition, the company soon became international in scope with representatives in the major cities of the world. During the years when the business flourished Brother Dobbs became quite well-to-do. With characteristic enthusiasm he plunged into the fight against the "growing pastor system."

When he learned of the growing storm at Beech Grove he mailed the brethren a bundle of his booklets which they passed out with considerable eagerness. This injected a new political angle into the fracas. It had been previously hinted that I was leading a "Yankee invasion" into one of the strongholds of the "Old South" and bringing in northern doctrine. It was purposely made to appear that I was a "religious carpetbagger." But O. C. Dobbs was from Birmingham, only a little way from where Jefferson Davis had been named President of "The Confederate States of America." He spoke with a southern accent and even wrote with one.

Brother McNutt knew he had to act quickly. He printed a book for general distribution in the area under the heading "Pastoring and Evangelizing." While a lot of it was devoted to trying to patch up what Brother Harper had said and my reply to him on the radio, quite a lot of space was devoted also to Brother Dobbs. He was accused of being one-sided, biased and prejudicial, and also of being "beside himself." Coming from the source it did, Brother Dobbs felt highly complimented and fired off a letter inviting Brother McNutt to a written debate which he would print at his expense.

All of this had kept the interest from waning and when I came for the Bible Study excellent audiences gathered every afternoon and night. We did not dwell on the troublesome issues but concentrated on teaching the Word. One afternoon the class was visited by Brother McNutt and the elders from Paragould. Sterl Watson had been imported from Saint Louis to bolster the cause. As soon as I had finished the lesson he arose and

demanded that I debate either Rue Porter, W. Curtis Porter, or G. K. Wallace. I agreed to meet either one or all of them. They asked me to write out propositions and submit them. I did so that week. But they could not agree upon them and the attempt fell flat.

One thing that gave me a great deal of hope was the eagerness of the people to know the Word. At each session we had folk from the community who were not members of the Church of Christ. The leaven of peace seemed to be working and I left feeling that good was being done in spite of outside agitation. Arrangements had been made that when I returned from Ireland I would hold another meeting, if the Lord willed. It was a great prospect!

4. The Beginnings of Change

Irish Stew

Contents

There was more than one reason why the brethren in Belfast felt that I could serve the cause we loved by coming to North Ireland. For one thing there had been some upsetting things happen during a recent mission conducted by C. E. McGaughey. Brother McGaughey had attempted to persuade those who had previously been immersed upon their faith in Jesus, in various groups, to be baptized again at his hands. The office-bearers of the congregation forbade him to "un-Christianize" those who had lived for Christ for years in order to "re-Christianize" them through his offices.

Brother McGaughey was quite adamant and when he influenced a few members of the Irish Baptist movement to cast their lot with the brethren he insisted that he was going to baptize them "for the remission of sins." The leaders argued that when one is immersed in order to obey God and upon his firm conviction that Jesus was the Messiah and God's Son it *was* for the remission of sins whether the believers knew it at the time or not. Forgiveness of sins was the design of God for those who were immersed in conformity with His will and not the design of man for being immersed. It was their contention that to immerse those who had previously been immersed, just to make them members of "the Church of Christ" was sectarian in nature and would be what American Baptists had always practiced.

The Irish brethren also resented the padding of reports in American journals of the number of baptisms abroad when, as they said, most of the people had been children of God for years before being taught the way of truth more perfectly and made into statistics by American preachers. The issue came to a head one night when Brother McGaughey had convinced some they should make their calling "safe" by submitting to baptism again. When he announced this at the close of the meeting the elders arose and turned the service over to another brother while they held a conference with the preacher in a rear room. An hour passed by while the congregation sang and praised God, but when another hour was well on its way and the participants in the discussion had not reappeared, the audience was dismissed. The contention behind the scenes continued as the Irish brethren fought to keep from becoming a foreign auxiliary to an American religious movement. Unalterable in their position against re-immersion, the mission of Brother McGaughey ended, but not until some unrest had been created among the saints.

It was felt that if I came to engage in a positive effort it would be a settling influence and have a quieting effect upon the disciples. Too, it was proposed that I do a good deal of evangelistic work, proclaiming the Good News in street meetings and visiting industrial plants for noon meetings with the workers. The brethren were already in the process of leading an effort in a new housing development which had grown up in the suburbs after the Nazi bombers had wrecked a great deal of the city and literally gutted some sections of it.

We had our final prayer together as a family around the breakfast table on February 8, before Jerry, dressed in his air force uniform, had to leave for work with his fellow airmen. He was twenty-one years old and six feet tall. At nine o'clock, in Union Station, I said goodbye to Nell, Sharon Sue, and a little girl from Honduras who was living with us. As the gate closed behind me and I boarded the train there was a lump in my throat and a prayer in my heart. Two days later I went aboard

the S.S. America, the largest and fastest passenger ship ever built in our country. Promptly at noon the gangplank was lifted and we edged away from the pier.

Both of my travel companions in the tourist stateroom to which I was assigned were Catholic men, but poles apart in life. One was an illiterate seaman off the streets of Cork who had sailed the seven seas. He knew every major port on the face of the earth. When I first saw him he was lying in a stupor in one of the top bunks, sleeping off a hard drinking spree which had lasted two days and nights. The other was a member of the faculty of the University of Chicago, a graduate of Illinois University and Notre Dame, and an authority in the history and language of the Celts. A more divergent trio to occupy a single room could not have been selected by a computer with an electrical short in its mechanism. We were together for five days and nights, and if I learned nothing else I found out that Catholics are not all cut from the same pattern. It was a good lesson for one who had grown up stereotyping them as we did about every other group.

I had engaged in many interesting spiritual conversations with scores of folk before we anchored off Cobh early in the morning of February 16. Ireland-bound passengers disembarked here and were taken to shore in a lighter and transported to Cork by ship's train. I had a half day to explore this ancient city which began with a religious settlement in 622 A.D. I already knew from my study of history that it fell to Oliver Cromwell during the English Civil War and I wanted to see as much of it as possible. I walked at a rapid pace all morning from one point to another and it was a relief when, at 1:15 p.m. I boarded the crack train "The Enterprise," and settled down for the almost seven hours of travel to Belfast.

I shall never forget that when I stepped from the train in the huge station I heard voices raised in song. Almost the entire congregation was present and the waves of music reverberated

through the corridors, "For Christ and the church let our voices ring." It was long after midnight when I retired to my room at 8 Sunninghill Garden, in the hospitable home of William and Margaret Hendren and their good family.

We lost no time getting into the work. The next evening was a welcome meeting with tea being served at the humble meetinghouse on Berlin Street. A beautiful table was set on the speaker's platform where I was to sit with the five men in the oversight— Brethren Hamilton, Millar, George, Charles and William Hendren. A well-arranged program continued until time to hurry to the nearest stop to catch the double-decker bus to the Cavehill area where I lodged. During the evening a program of events was outlined to occupy every night of the more than three months I would be in Belfast.

On each Lord's Day morning we would meet at 11:30 for the breaking of bread. The edification talk at these meetings would be delivered by a member of the congregation. At 3:00 p.m. I would teach the children of the community, and at 4:00 p.m. have a class of young men and women. Following that we would hold three or four street meetings at strategic corners and return for the gospel meeting at 7:00 p.m. On Monday nights we would have a meeting for singing and praise led by George Hendren. On Tuesday nights I would teach the neighborhood children (there were more than a hundred at the first session). On Wednesday nights there would be a gospel meeting, on Thursday evening a meeting for prayer and devotion in a home, and on Friday night a study in depth which I would lead.

During my stay we would also arrange for two weeks of gospel proclamation which would be especially publicized in the area. I wish that I might take you on a day-by-day trip with us and let you share every exciting minute, but space will not permit. Each new day brought its own thrill of being and at night we usually gathered in the little home of "Granny Hendren" who lived with her daughters Edith and Mary close to

the meetingplace. Here we recounted the events of the day and talked and prayed together until time for the last bus to run.

On March 6, I was invited by Mr. Oliver, assistant supervisor of the government press bureau, to attend a sitting of the Parliament, with eleven other observers. After being conducted to my seat in the beautiful Senate room by an usher in full dress, I was treated to a scene of almost medieval dignity and pageantry. The Speaker, who sat upon a throne-like chair on a raised dais, wore an imposing robe and a powdered wig which fell in waves to his shoulders. The Clerk of the Senate, who sat before him, had a shorter wig, with marcelled waves and two tiny tails tied with ribbons and hanging down his back.

It was my good fortune to be present in a session in which cabinet ministers were being seriously questioned as to their action. I was especially interested in the Minister of Agriculture who was charged with supervising rationing. All of us were limited to four ounces of red meat per week. The cooking fat ration amounted to two ounces, and we were allowed two eggs per week. This could be supplemented by horse, whale or beaver meat, which were not limited when available. A black market had developed in pork ribs, knees and bones, which the Secretary affirmed was being carried on from England in spite of the efforts of the secret service of Her Majesty's government.

It was when the Minister of Home Affairs was put on the grill that things really "got cracking." Ireland seemed to have more than her share of gypsies who roamed the countryside in their gaily-colored horse-drawn caravans. Parliament had ordered that some method be devised and steps taken to ensure a suitable education for the children of gypsies and other vagrants. Included in the directive was religious training. The Ministry might as well have ordered to contrive a means of educating the winds that blew across the landscape, or the waves of the sea. Gypsy children were as elusive as little wild animals.

During this discussion which became heated I heard some of the most penetrating satire and biting sarcasm delivered under cover of urbane politeness. I could catch a glimpse of the deep hostility which has long since burst its bonds in what is now referred to in Ireland as "the troubles." Some of the members of Parliament represented a Catholic constituency. They raised pointed questions as to the kind of religious teaching to be bestowed by law upon gypsy children. I trust I am not prejudiced but I want to testify that the Protestants who sat on the benches were among the most capable and quick-witted men I have ever heard. Their sharp repartee was something else!

The next day, Mr. McIvor, the efficient headmaster of Mount Collyer School, invited me to spend the entire day, or as much time as I could spare, at the public school which he supervised. I had already spent two hours with him, exploring the difference in educational concepts and goals in our two countries. Mount Collyer was a new adventure in schooling for the more than 800 youngsters in attendance. School began each morning with prayer, scripture readings from the Old and New Testaments, and a brief devotional talk.

The law requires that there be five classes in religion each week for public school students. I was permitted to examine the course of study which had to be non-sectarian in content and presentation. It was very comprehensive of the narrative portions of the Old and New Testaments through the book of Acts. The discipline was both rigid and remarkable. When the headmaster and I visited certain rooms every pupil arose and stood at respectful attention until he told them to be seated. When we left a room the student nearest the door arose and opened it, remaining at attention to close it after we had gone.

I stayed for lunch and would not have missed the experience. Most of the children went home for their noon meal but about 200 stayed. Luncheon was prepared in a central kitchen and conveyed by special vans to each school. The day I

was present the supervisor of all lunch rooms in city schools was present and graciously answered all of my questions. The 200 children filed in and quietly took their places at the tables. It was unbelievably quiet. A teacher gave the signal and all bowed their heads and returned thanks in unison, then quietly arose and passed by where the food was being dipped up by student helpers. The menu was Irish stew, mashed potatoes and cake with pudding sauce over it. Milk was provided at each plate. The cost of the meal was six cents in American monetary value. The day I attended more than 30 children were fed free because of poverty-stricken conditions in their homes.

The next day I was invited to speak to a group of men at the shipyards, the largest such yards in the world. I was taken on an inspection tour where I saw three huge aircraft carriers were in the process of construction as well as numerous other vessels. One of these was a mammoth oil tanker for Norway. Another was a whaling ship to be fully equipped to process every ounce of the huge catches. Daily religious meetings were held in the Plumbing Department and here I was greeted by more than 250 men. A loudspeaker system had been set up for our use so that all might hear. Sandy and Nat Cooper, who had accompanied me, sang a hymn at the beginning and end of the thirty minute period, and after the message had been given we passed out more than 200 tracts to the workmen going back to their appointed stations.

My life was enriched when Albert Winstanley came over from England to work with me for four days. We shared together in the children's meeting, where he was especially adept, and in the gospel meeting where we took turns announcing the blessed facts about the divine breakthrough of the flesh curtain by God's Son. Together we went to a lecture on "The Seven Seals" by a recognized leader of the British-Israel theory and remained to question some of the more rabid followers of the view. But, best of all were the street meetings, four of which we held one afternoon in company with Nat

Cooper, a young man of promise. We gathered some 80 boys and girls and led them down the street, singing at the top of their voices. We stopped at street corners where everyone who passed by halted and gave us audience and we took turns preaching the kingdom of God and the way of the cross.

Time was passing rapidly and the days were filled with all kinds of intriguing things. There were visits to linen mills, to manufacturing concerns, to public parks, and other places where opportunities were presented to witness of the grace of God. We were seeing precious souls added to the one body each week. Some of these came in response to public declaration of God's love, others after I had conversed and prayed with them privately. The saints were rejoicing in the confessions of faith made in our meetings and all of us were made aware of the power of the Word and the moving of the Spirit in the hearts of men. The old, old story was still new and vital!

4. The Beginnings of Change

The Knock at the Door

Contents

I come now to the place where I must recount a life-changing experience which was destined to completely re-orient the whole philosophy of my relationship to the kingdom of heaven. I apologize to my readers for the time to be spent in narrative, seeing that nothing is ordinarily quite so boring as listening to another recount what happened to him. I must preface what I shall say with the statement that I am a pragmatist, and not a mystic, by nature, although all of us are combinations of both. I suspect that every wholehearted follower of Jesus is confronted sooner or later with a sense of a great gulf which exists between what he believes and what he really is. For some, the confrontation with the Living Lord is gradual and almost academic. For others it may come as a flash of light in a crisis situation. That the latter should have been my lot is as unexplainable to me as it will be to those of you who now read about it.

It occurred on the afternoon of March 27, 1951. I know where it took place and I know the moment it took place. I am convinced now that if I had never left America it would not have happened at all. Before I went to Ireland I conveyed to the brethren there my hope of visiting the little village of Ahorey, and the meetinghouse in which Thomas Campbell had ministered. William Hendren and Joe Hamilton made contact with Mr. T. S. Hoey, secretary of the little Presbyterian

congregation, and he graciously suggested that we conduct a service in the quaint little place. Arrangements were made for Easter Monday, which is a "bank holiday" upon which all business places are closed and workers are free.

Sixty-five of us met at the little Berlin Street meetinghouse early in the morning of a dark and dreary day with the rain pouring down. After a time of prayer we boarded the two chartered buses and set out upon our trip. Fortunately, by the time we reached Ahorey, the rain had ceased. The little village where Alexander Campbell spent his early boyhood was small indeed. Only three Irish farm cottages could be seen. One of them was used as a post office. The meetinghouse sat back in a yard which could have been the setting for Gray's Elegy. We made our way along the path which was flanked by the moss-covered grave markers to the door of the lovely little building where we were warmly greeted by the Presbyterian welcoming committee.

In the entrance hall was a bronze plaque of Thomas Campbell inscribed with the words *Prophet of Union*. He was the second pastor of the congregation, assuming his charge in 1798. When we entered the place of meeting its quaintness and old-worldliness struck our attention. It was lighted with paraffin lamps. The pews had to be entered through little gates which had first to be unlocked. When the brethren had filed in and our Presbyterian hosts were seated, I unlocked the door leading to the speaker's platform and took my place behind the stand containing the same large pulpit Bible from which Mr. Campbell had often read.

The audience stood and sang "The Lord's My Shepherd" to the haunting melody of the tune *Crimond*. William Hendren led a prayer for the unity of all believers in the Lord Jesus. I turned to Ephesians 2 and read the chapter. I was moved to speak, as never before, on verse 14. "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of

partition between us." I must have spoken more to myself than to the others, because all the rest of the day the expression "He is our peace" kept rising to the surface of my consciousness, to be repeated silently.

We were taken on a tour of the manse which had been completely refurbished in anticipation of the coming of the new pastor a fortnight hence. Then a gentle elderly woman who lived in a low whitewashed cottage with a thatched roof, sent word asking if the American visitor would grace her humble abode for tea. Five of us readily accepted her invitation and sat down for a country repast in a dark little room where chunks of peat glowed in the tiny fireplace. Legend had it that when the Campbells resided in the manse, Alexander often stopped at this ancient cottage while returning from Armagh, which was about four miles distant.

We went to Armagh, which dates its existence from 300 B.C., and to the great library established by Primate Robinson in 1771. We walked across the city to the observatory, founded on "The Hill of Honey" in 1790, to be greeted by the present director, Dr. E. M. Lindsay, of Harvard fame, and now recognized in astronomical circles throughout the world. Dr. E. J. Opik, driven from his home in Estonia by the Soviet invasion, explained to us at length his research into the nature of solar eclipses. We ended our visit in the area by exploring Saint Patrick's Cathedral, more than six centuries old, and now the headquarters for the Anglican Church in North Ireland.

As we boarded the buses for the return to Belfast the weather became nasty and bad, and soon the rain turned to snow which took the form of a sweeping blizzard by the time we reached the city streets. Because of the long and tiresome journey of the day, those with whom I lodged went on home, while I lingered with the George Hendren family for tea before the cheerful fireplace. Later, when I stepped out into the night to begin the more than two mile walk, I was engulfed in swirling

snow. I had to make my way from one faint street light to another as I trudged along through five inches of accumulated snow.

I have never experienced a greater sense of loneliness. It was as if I was walking through a universe devoid of all life but my own. The only sound to be heard in a great city was that of my shoes crunching the snow beneath them. The activities of the day came surging back into my mind and mingled with the reveries were the images of the noble souls who dared, in the midst of division, to dream of a united church. I thought again of the text which came to me as I read the Word, and of how it had also stirred the mind of a Presbyterian minister in such a rustic setting. I recalled the message I had recorded in the home of Mr. Hoey to be played at the next meeting of the Synod in Belfast. In that talk I urged that if they had others of the caliber of Mr. Campbell, that they send them to American shores to encourage unity among the frightfully-divided heirs of the movement launched by their gentle minister of yesteryear.

I was smitten with the hypocrisy of a plea for a humble peasantry to provide another apostle for oneness while I was among them as a factional representative. It came home to me with force that I had never really labored for the unity of all who believed in Jesus. I had actually, in mistaken zeal, contributed to the fragmentation of the very movement which Thomas Campbell had launched with such high hopes and great promise. Instead of furthering the noble "project to unite the Christians in all of the sects," I had absorbed and sometimes even gloried in a sectarian spirit.

As I stumbled along through the deepening snow, alone in a foreign city, I found myself weeping and praying and making promises to God of what I would do if my life was spared through His grace. The word *grace* came like a ray of hope and I rolled it on my tongue like a juicy morsel. What I needed to make life worth living, to overcome my frustration, to rise above

the futility of my own efforts was grace. In all of my forty-three years no other thought had ever struck me with such force.

In my darkened room I lay awake all night wrestling with my own thoughts. The hours dragged on in the velvety blackness as I went back over every step of the day before. When dawn came I was empty, drained and helpless. Every dream of my life had vanished. Every ship of hope I had launched lay in broken pieces upon the rocks of my own past. I went downstairs to gaze out upon a world of diamond-flecked whiteness but even its scintillating beauty impressed me but a fleeting second.

I sat down before the little hearth with its one lump of coal (the last one of our ration) and picked up the Bible. My eyes were dim from weeping and from staring into darkness through a sleepless night. Without design I began reading with verse one of Revelation. I became aware that thoughts were leaping from the pages which I had read so often and taking lodgment in my benumbed brain. It was fascinating to have words come alive and to see their souls separate from the characters which the typesetter had given them as bodies, and free themselves from the prison of print to take up abode in my mind.

I read until I came to the letter addressed to the community of the reconciled ones at Laodicea. I could identify with it as representative of our movement. We thought of ourselves as rich and increased with goods, and needing nothing. I remembered the oft-repeated question, "What is there left to restore?" or, sometimes, "What do we need that we do not have?" But I could also realize that we were poor, and wretched, and blind, and naked, as God saw us. I read on and came to realize what was meant by the gold tried in the fire which could be purchased only at the divine currency exchange by those willing to pay the staggering price. At last I knew what was meant by the white raiment which covers the nakedness of congregations which parade unashamedly, unaware that their garments of fig leaves and their masks are transparent, and they

are wearing see-through apparel while the world looks and laughs. For the first time I also knew what was meant by the ointment which restores sight to eyes that are blinded by cataracts of pride, ambition and sectarian prestige.

And then I saw the answer to all of my longings, all of my loneliness, all of my lovelessness to others, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." I had never once invited Jesus to come in. True, I had never asked Him to stay out, but I had never shared with Him the kind of intimacy He had promised, the warm glow of companionship at the supper table, the convivial atmosphere in which friends talk and laugh and joke together, and let themselves go in the firm trust that they perfectly understand one another.

I had come to Jesus thirty years before, and then some, but it is one thing to come to Jesus at His invitation, and a wholly different thing to have Jesus come in to you at *your* invitation. I came to Him out of a state of alienation, like a refugee fished out of the muck and mire who needs to be cleaned up in the bath of regeneration and given an abiding place. But the statement to the Laodiceans was not made to those outside. It was made to those inside. It was Jesus who was outside. Regardless of the state of the things in the congregation with which one was identified, that one could have a royal guest sitting at his supper table and gracing his abode with His presence.

He did not need to leave where he was. He did not need to look for another "church." In the midst of poverty of spirit, wretchedness, misery, blindness and shameless nudity, he could be filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory. I had never really experienced that kind of joy. In fact, nothing had ever happened to me that I could not describe and glibly enough at that. I had been dubious of anyone who had been too happy. It did not seem right for a Christian who ought to be "walking on

eggshells" for fear there was a minute law he might have overlooked and which would bring the wrath of God down upon his unsuspecting skull like the pagan temple which killed blind Samson while the idolators were laughing at him.

Now I was being tendered an offer of genuine, thrilling, life-changing association which could have been mine all along if I had not wandered in the fog boiling up from the dank and boggy marshes of legalism and tradition. All I had to do was to hear a voice and open the door. That was it. There was no other condition, no regimen of penance, no burden of regret about yesterday. There was no high-pressure selling, no arm-twisting. Loneliness would leave through the same door by which He entered, exactly as light must dispel darkness.

I heard his knock! I heard His voice! I am not talking about audible impressions or things like sound waves or reverberation. It was too deep "for sound or foam" as the poet said. So I arose and put on my overcoat and the borrowed overshoes which had been loaned to me by a kind brother, and walked the two blocks over to where the double-decker bus stopped to pick up riders bound for the heart of the city. I swung off of the platform at Shankill Road and walked up to the little meetinghouse on Berlin Street. Inside it was dark and filled with cold which caught warm breath and sent it swirling upward like a cloud.

I sat down in a pew selected at random and counted the cost of what I was about to do. I realized that I had been tracked down and brought to bay by "the hound of heaven." It must have been an hour I sat there with the cold seeking the openings in the fibers of my clothing. At last I kneeled down and spoke, perhaps audibly, "This is it! I have come to the end of the road and I'm opening the door! Come in!" Immediately He did exactly what He promised He would do, and I knew it! There were no hot flashes, no hair standing on end, no goose-pimples, no spinal chills, no "speaking in tongues." There was none of

that!

But there was the indescribable feeling of the rightness of all things, the possession of a peace which transcended human rationality and understanding. I knew a part of me had died and that part would never be resurrected. It had been replaced with a new "me" who was not all of my own creation. I was different and I knew that I was different. I also knew I would never be the same again. Never, regardless of what happened. And then there was that joy! Perhaps the most powerful thought which gripped me was that I had no further enemies among the brethren. They were all children of God! We had a common Father. It struck me like a flash that I could never again hate those whom He loved.

As J. B. Phillips put it, "We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren." It was months before I learned that the love of God had been poured out in my heart by the Holy Spirit He had given me (Romans 5:5).

4. The Beginnings of Change

Life in the Spirit

Contents

In these days I am often asked in public how I explain the traumatic experience which I described in the previous chapter. It is not a satisfactory reply to say that I do not explain it, but simply recount it. Our brethren have been conditioned to think there must be a specific explanation for everything. The explanation must harmonize with and conform to our traditional thought-patterns or be summarily rejected or laughed out of court. I know how they feel for I once felt exactly the same way. Nothing can possibly happen beyond our power of comprehension. If we could not explain it, it obviously did not happen. One who said it did was either deceived or a deceiver.

I am grateful that God's grace has made it possible for me to outgrow that kind of arrogance. Now I can be like the man who was healed by Jesus after having been blind from birth. He was subjected to the third-degree and given a Star-chamber grilling by the local Pharisees who would rather have him blind than healed by someone as unorthodox as Jesus. He was ignorant about a lot of things as they related to the "how." But he said, "One thing I do know: I was blind and now I see." That was not enough for the Pharisees, so they threw him out of the local congregation, which is "par for the course" when there are Pharisees around. Jesus heard about it and looked him up, realizing that He was closer to the one on the outside than to those on the inside.

At first I said nothing to anyone about the soul-satisfying entrance of Jesus and the inward supper-sharing experience every day. I just continued to feast with Him and He with me, rejoicing in the Spirit. You must remember that I grew up among good brethren who prayed out of a sense of duty. It was a command, a legal requirement, an act of worship. You had to go through the act to be safe. If you neglected it God would clobber you. We did not so much pray as we "said prayers." I do not think we expected anything to happen, and it generally did not. If it did we regarded it as a fortunate accident.

As time went on and I was driven by the Spirit within to make myself vulnerable by going among those from whom I had been isolated, the fruits of the Spirit were beginning to be detected in my advocacy of love, joy and peace, as opposed to accusation, challenge and debate. At first no one thought it was real. They freely predicted it would not last and that I would eventually return to sanity and be as mean as I was before. But since I had spent some time in "Arabia" before I returned to "Jerusalem," by the time I began to write on my growing conviction as to the fellowship of the reconciliation, a new wave was beginning to sweep across the religious strand. Eventually it would affect both the Catholic and Protestant establishments and wash over into every segment of the restoration movement.

It ushered in what came to be known as the "charismatic age" although this was a serious misnomer. The more profound student of the new covenant scriptures will at once recognize there can be no charismatic age, for the simple reason that there has never been a non-charismatic age. The work of God has always been made possible by the gifts of God. The Spirit is no less powerful and no more inactive in one century than another. He does not activate in spasms nor motivate in spurts. He has always been the life of the body and will be while the Son sits at the right hand of the Father.

But a lot of branches which had become lifeless and devoid

of fruit were led by cultural conditions (I think) to open up their hearts to the will of God for the first time, and as a result of fervent entreaty, were filled with the Spirit. They mistook this filling with the baptism of the Holy Spirit and were ecstatic over the boldness and inner might which became theirs. As a result, when I was asked what had brought about my change of attitude, and I reluctantly described what had transpired, I was repeatedly interrogated as to whether I had received "the baptism of the Holy Spirit."

The answer is simple. I did not. I consider the baptism of the Holy Spirit a one-time experience to bring the body into union, as I regard baptism in water a one-time experience to bring me into union with the body. Before the one body existed, mankind was divided into two great classes. One of these was nigh, the other was far off. One was called the circumcision, the other the uncircumcision. On Pentecost, the representatives of the Jewish nation received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. At the home of Cornelius, several years later, the representatives of the Gentile nations received the "like gift" as did the Jews at the beginning. Jesus became the peace who made both one. He reconciled both unto God in one body by the cross. Both then had access by one Spirit unto the Father.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is never mentioned again in the word of God. It was unrepeatable because it was unnecessary. The good news was to the Jew first and also to the Greek. After it was established that both must enter into the new relationship and be justified by faith, there was no further need to exhibit the baptism. I reject, as untenable for me, the interpretation of I Corinthians 12:13 which makes this equivalent to what occurred in Jerusalem and Caesarea. Before me, as I write, lies a copy of the *Pentecostal Evangel*. It contains an article by G. Raymond Carlson, Assistant General Superintendent of the Assemblies of God. The title is "The Charismatic Movement Today."

The article contains many good things. It is extremely well written. But it uses the term "Baptized in the Holy Spirit" more times in three pages than it is mentioned in all of the letters to the individuals and saints, as written by the holy apostles. It also makes repeated reference to "the Pentecostal experience." With all due respect to our friends who differ with me, there is no such thing. Pentecost marked the birthday of the earthly phase of the kingdom of God. There can be but one birthday, although there may be many anniversaries to remember or celebrate it. The writer should probably call his "a Corinthian experience," since those who claim the experience distinguish what happened on Pentecost from what happened at Corinth. I do not personally recognize the difference. But I can readily understand why one would not want to be too closely identified with Corinth.

I am quite convinced that the Holy Spirit has dwelt in me since the day I validated my faith in Jesus by being baptized into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. He was God's gift to me according to His promise when I was granted the forgiveness of my sins and was justified by His grace. The Holy Spirit is the present possession of every child of God in this whole wide world. But I was ignorant that He was my Comforter, my Advocate, my Helper. At first I was taught that the Spirit was the Word. We confused Him with the Bible which tells us about Him, because of an unfortunate and tragic misunderstanding of John 6:63. When gradually forced to relinquish that mistaken notion we drove Him into a corner, bounded by the first century and the lifetime of the apostles, and sheared Him of all power in the present.

Driven to the wall by my own weakness and unbrotherly attitude, when I opened the door of my heart to invite Jesus to come in, the Spirit was freed from the bondage and limitations of my own littleness and unworthiness, to pour out the love of God in my heart. I no longer had to try and "finish by my own power" what had begun by the Spirit (Galatians 3:3). Having

said this, I want to clarify my position with reference to those brethren who claim "the baptism of the Holy Spirit." I am not upset by their descriptive terminology even though I think they are mistaken.

It seems to me that many of them confuse the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the filling of the Holy Spirit. There is a real and valid difference between the two. I'm not certain that those within the scriptural context prayed for the baptism of the Holy Spirit, although the filling of the Spirit is connected with prayer and manifests itself in a sense of boldness in speaking God's message, as in Acts 4:31. The baptism of the Holy Spirit was to create a new body; the filling of the Holy Spirit is to renew the members of the body. The experience of the Spirit is more important than what one calls it, just as any deed is more important than its designation. One who is not free to make mistakes is not free to make anything else. So I do not propose to engage in strife about words. Regardless of how one labels what happened to him to produce a closer walk with God I am thrilled that it happened. The result is a blessing and I rejoice in that.

In my case the happening drove me to more than six years of prayerful, and sometimes tearful, re-examination of my whole religious philosophy. I was forced into painful introspection and meditation. It was agonizing to have my idols torn from their pedestals. I came to realize that I had been wrong all of my life in my usage of the scriptures to condone and defend our divisions. When the true meaning and significance of the fellowship began to enter into my consciousness, it was as if a huge burden had been lifted. But that did not come until weary years had passed, and meanwhile I was still abroad. Worse yet, I must return to America and face brethren who had experienced no change. The more charitable of them would come to think I had lost my mind. Many of the others would conclude that I had denied the faith and was worse than an infidel. I would see the day in which I was misrepresented, lied about, and actually

hated because of His name's sake!

On the evening of March 30 I left Belfast for a brief interlude in England. Taking the cross-channel steamer for Heysham at night, the next morning I caught the train to Ulverston where I found Brother Walter Crosthwaite waiting. In two months he would celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of his first public message in defense of the gospel. I found him still busy teaching the Word, corresponding with the saints, and editing *Scripture Standard*. The five days and nights spent in the home of this godly patriarch of the faith will linger in my memory as one of the most fruitful periods of my earthly sojourn.

We sat before the little grate fire and talked for hours. Never a moment of it was wasted upon trivia, but the subtle humor and tremendous fund of anecdotes and reminiscences of an old soldier who bore the scars of spiritual conflict made the hours pass all too rapidly. It was hard to tear myself away to mount the stairs to the little triangular bedroom where I slept, and after a few hours' repose I arose eagerly to go downstairs and resume our conversation. I am sure that these few days with a veteran in the service were desperately needed to enable me to withstand in the trying years in which I would face growing opposition while trying to divest myself of the party spirit. The morning I left Brother Crosthwaite walked with me to the station. As we clasped hands, both of us knew we would never talk again on earth. I wiped the tears away as I boarded the train.

Albert Winstanley and Will Hurcombe were waiting on the platform as the train pulled into Wigan, and they conducted me to the hospitable home of Leonard and Doris Morgan where Nell and I had stayed four years before. I spoke at a different place each night— Scholes, Argyle Street at Hindley, Blackburn, Ince, Albert Street in Wigan— and souls were added to the Lord. Each day Albert and I went from house to house, exhorting the

saints, pleading with the unsaved, and comforting the afflicted. Through the mists of the years I can still see the faces of the brethren— Stephen Winstanley, Leonard Morgan, Carlton Melling, Harry Wilson, John Pritt, and a host of others. Many have departed to be with the Lord, but as I write this, some are still camped on this side of Jordan waiting to enter the promised land.

My arrival back in Belfast on April 12 was propitious. *The Evening Telegraph* **announced a baccalaureate address for the Reformed Presbyterian Seminary to be delivered to the graduates on April 12, by Dr. James Campbell, M.A., of Larne. The subject of the discourse was to be "Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs." The paid advertisement said the speakers would also discuss the reason for the church's opposition to the use of instrumental music in public praise. I went early and found myself in the company of aged professors from the school, most of them in clerical garb. For almost thirty minutes I was privileged to converse with the instructors in Hebrew, Greek, Homiletics and Church History. Not one was less than seventy years of age and all were richly endowed with scholastic degrees.**

The moderator introduced me to the graduates. I was much impressed with one who had prepared himself to go as a missionary to Syria. I met Dr. Campbell before he spoke and he insisted that I address the assembly briefly following his formal speech. Our meeting created a contact which we kept alive for five years through exchange of letters.

The text of his speech was Colossians 3:15-17. He contended against the use of uninspired songs as expression of public worship, equating hymns and spiritual songs as descriptive of certain types of psalms found in the old covenant scriptures. In his outspoken opposition to the use of instrumental music he declared that it was never really introduced until the 13th century, and then by an apostate church. He asserted that the only acceptable instrument for

offering praise was the human heart indwelt by the Spirit of God, and said that every reformer worthy of the title had always seen the need of removing the organ and other human instruments as an indication of the serious attempt to return to the ancient order.

In the closing moments of his speech, the learned Presbyterian decried the use of choirs, solos, and quartets in the praise service. He asserted that public praise in the time of the apostles was always congregational. It was always rendered to God and never used to entertain men. In a rather impassioned peroration he besought the graduates going forth into the world to resist the tug of the spirit of this age and seek to imitate the holy apostles rather than the unholy world about them.

He was dressed in somber garb with a long black clerical coat and with knee breeches fastened with silver buckles. His feet were clad in gaiters common to clergymen in the land. As I sat and listened it was not difficult to imagine that Thomas Campbell had returned after all these years, again to address the Belfast Synod, as he was wont to do in days of yore.

4. The Beginnings of Change

The Land of the Thistle

Contents

On May 10, 1951, I celebrated my forty-third birthday, far from home and in a foreign land. In honor of the occasion we broke open some of the food parcels from home and served a little dinner for the saints in Belfast. Two days later I began my journey by train to Southern Ireland where I was to meet Nell who was coming over on the *America*. I was especially pleased that my itinerary called for me to spend a night and the greater part of a day in Dublin. I chose as my overnight abode the Four Courts Hotel on the River Liffey.

Four centuries ago it was known as Angel Inn, and became the home of Jonathan Swift, the author of *Gulliver's Travels*. A clever and brilliant satirist, he punched holes in the political and religious pretensions of his day. In 1713 he was appointed dean of Saint Patrick's Cathedral, but with the fall of the Tory Administration a year later his political career ended, and he retired to Angel Inn where he died in 1745. When the inn was remodeled, the decorator made lavish use of mirrors and statuary, so that one feels he is staying in a museum.

The original floor of wide boards fastened with wooden dowels has been left throughout, so that one can literally walk where the author of *Tale of a Tub* trod. There is, among the public rooms, a spacious lounge and writing room with a huge open-grate fireplace. Since I always seem to get more from my

reading when I am in the proper atmosphere, I settled down in a leather chair in this room, resolved to read some of the poetry by Swift which I had never taken time to read. It was an evening well-spent. I shall always remember scanning the poem "A Description of a City Shower" while the face of its author stared out at me from its frame.

I cannot forbear saying a little about Dublin, the capital of the Irish Free State. It is a city famous for its educational and cultural background. When I became acquainted with the works of Richard Chenevix Trench, and especially his volume *On the Study of Words*, **I learned that he had been Archbishop of Dublin. This motivated me to learn all I could about the city and especially the Protestant influence within it. I remember having been impressed with the fact that the Alexandrian geographer, Ptolemy, who lived about 150 A.D., had mentioned the original settlement which grew into Dublin.**

As I walked the streets I felt like Paul did at Athens when he saw the city wholly given over to idolatry. Images for worship were everywhere. Candle factories were prominent, manufacturing tapers to be lighted before saintly statuary. Clerical garb was everywhere manifest as priests and nuns walked the streets. Advertisements of pilgrimages to Rome and Lourdes appeared on bulletin boards and in shop windows. I read through the long list of obituaries to see if one Protestant was listed. Apparently the Protestants are extremely healthy. I found not one name. That thousands of Irish had gone to America was evidenced by the number of death notices containing the words: "American papers please copy."

On May 13, I went to Cork, a train ride of 165 miles to the southwest of Dublin. In the knowledge that I might never be there again I walked as rapidly as possible to cover important areas in this city of more than 80,000. Cork is the home of two cathedrals, one Roman Catholic, the other Anglican. Both are called St. Finbar, after the name of the founder of the city in 622

A.D. It was late when I got to Cobh, and the Hotel Commodore where I was to spend the night.

I arose early the next morning to go to the dock. The *America* had anchored about four miles offshore before daybreak, and passengers who were to be taken off on the tender were given an early breakfast. I saw Nell as she stepped off the lighter and soon she saw me and waved. But we could not be together until she had cleared customs. What a blessing it was to hold her in my arms again after an absence of months. We had much to talk about on the long train journey to Belfast. When we arrived at the station we heard the beautiful strains of "The Lord's My Shepherd" being sung to the tune *Crimond*. The whole congregation was there and their singing stopped even the train crews who paused to listen to every word.

We had one more week in Belfast and our hearts were torn that the time of our departure was so close. The final days created a kaleidoscope of memories. Each day the members vied with each other to show us something of interest. Each night I spoke to a gathering of the saints. A visit to a large linen factory, a trip to the magnificent City Hall, crowned by a view of the private office of the Lord Mayor, through the courtesy of his secretary, a final tour of inland Ireland, a day at Bangor by the seaside, and then the final night and the farewell tea at the meetinghouse.

The chorus sang beautifully. Different brethren made brief talks. We wept unashamedly. We clung to one another, reluctant to take leave. The congregation gave us a lovely picture of the Mountains of Mourne, personally autographed by the painter. Nell received numerous gifts of linen and some of the sisters presented her with treasured heirlooms and keepsakes, out of hearts filled with generosity.

The next evening we had our final tea at the hospitable home of William and Margaret Hendren, and then drove to the

docks where we were to board *The Royal Ulsterman* for the cross-channel trip. Almost the whole congregation was at the dock, and as the ship drifted slowly away from the wharf and out into the darkness, we could hear the strains of "God Be With You Till We Meet Again." A feeling gripped our hearts that we would never again see these precious ones upon this earth.

I have never forgotten Belfast. I can still envision the children swinging on ropes attached to the street lamps. I can still see the women on their knees scrubbing the sidewalks in front of their homes with reddened hands. I remember the groups harmonizing in song on the street corners at night, the women draped with thick shawls or blankets to shelter them from the cold as they walked to unheated shops, the many pushcarts on the street, the window washers carrying their ladders and buckets. I shared the agony and the ecstasy of a people who had just come through a devastating war and had triumphed and I left a little bit of myself in Ireland.

We were met at the dock in Glasgow by John and Mary McCallum and spent the day resting in their home while catching up on letter writing. It is a good thing we found this little time for relaxation because I was getting ready to go into a hectic schedule without realizing it. The next afternoon we left for Tranent, where I had spent my time exhorting the saints of the Slamannan District, in my final meeting in Scotland four years before. We stopped enroute at the home of Joe and Agnes Kerr where we were to stay all night. They had moved from Harthill to Prestonpans since our visit.

The place was rife with history. The house where the Kerrs lived was on the banks of Red Burn which flowed red with blood on September 21, 1745 when the Jacobite forces led by Charles Edward Stuart known as the "Young Pretender" or "Bonnie Prince Charlie" defeated the British under Sir John Cope. The monument to the victory of the wild tartan-clad clansmen still stands on the field in Prestonpans. It marks the high tide of the

rally of the Stuarts before their forces were completely routed at Culloden Moor in April, 1746, and Charles Edward became a hunted fugitive.

Just as interesting to me was what had happened here in 1590 when witchcraft became an organized institution. A number of persons who claimed to have seen and conversed with the devil, and who had entered into a compact with him, began to exercise a great deal of influence. Superstition ran riot. Special meetings were held at night in the church building at Old Berwick, and graves were opened by these progenitors of modern spiritualism who collected human skulls and bones to use in their incantations. Some there were who predicted that Satan was preparing to capture the world and this would be his headquarters and the place of his throne.

King James, who became a specialist in witch-hunting, and who defied the curses pronounced upon him, effectively put an end to the ambition of the witches. He had his soldiers gather up a group of them and ordered that they be publicly strangled and their bodies burned. Some of their more ardent followers declared secretly that no fire would be able to burn them. Not only did their bodies burn, but their leader, Dr. Fian, was executed at Castle Hill in Edinburgh on December 26, 1591. This halted the immediate outbreak of superstition, but that it did not completely crush it is evidenced by the fact that the last person to be executed as a witch in England was in 1716, while the last one in Scotland died in 1722.

Fifty Bible teachers from the Slamannan District gathered at Lochside Chapel, which I remembered so well, on this Saturday afternoon, for a discussion of means and methods of improving their efforts. The meeting was ably presided over by John Steel, an art instructor at Airdrie Academy. We sang a hymn, had a prayer, and then sat down together for tea. I recalled that it had been said that Gabriel would have to be careful about when he sounded his trumpet, for if it was at

teatime, no Scotsman would show up. After tea, I spoke briefly and then opened the meeting for questions.

Before we realized it three hours had slipped away. Afterwards a number of folk gathered at the Kerr home and entertained us with Scottish ballads and songs of the Jacobites, as the defenders of the house of Stuart were called. I have never again heard "By Yon Bonnie Banks and By Yon Bonnie Braes" done as effectively as that night. And when I hear "Will Ye No Come Back Again?" my mind reverts to that Saturday night in May. It was an unforgettable time of love and fellowship and genial good-feeling.

The next morning Joe and I walked the three miles to Tranent where I was to teach for more than an hour in a gathering of the saints who came early. It was a refreshing walk along a road in Scotland, past the monument to the battle, and with the town always in sight. The "breaking of bread service" as our brethren designate it, began at 11:30 a.m. and continued until 1:00 p.m. I spoke again to the edification of those present, and then Nell and I went to the nearby home of Sister Wilson, and her daughter Jean, for a quick luncheon. In the interval between my trips to Scotland Brother Wilson had departed to be with Jesus. I missed him greatly. Sister Wilson remembered my taste for Scotch oatcakes and had laid in a goodly supply.

I spoke to different groups at 2:00 p.m., 3:00 p.m., and 4:00 p.m., and at the gospel meeting at 6:00 p.m. This was not enough and after I had finished the brethren convened again to hear me for another hour. All of us were tired after we felt our way back through 32 miles of pea soup fog to the McCallum home. It was 1:00 a.m. when we finally retired. Before I could go to sleep I thought back over the entire day. I had a good feeling about the cause at Tranent. A number of younger brethren were identified with the work. The possibilities for growth seemed great. The brethren were firmly grounded in the concept of "mutual ministry" and the utilization of all the gifts.

We had one more week remaining in the "land of the thistle." If I were to tell you all that happened this literary effort would be expanded far beyond its worth. There were scenic tours to Loch Lomond along roads lined with colorful rhododendron, while snow-capped Ben Lomond towered high in the distance; to Gareloch, the salt water lake off the Clyde, which was filled with the ships of the famed British Navy; to the mighty Forth Bridge, an engineering wonder; and to the renowned Castle Hill in Edinburgh where kilted sentries paced back and forth.

But even more interesting was the return to congregations we had previously visited and to the homes of saints we had seen four years ago. There was the meeting in Glasgow, the one in Motherwell, where David Dougal had labored with diligence and effectiveness for two months. Then on to Slamannan which gave its name to the district. We went into the homes of folk I had met in Canada. One was the home of a sister whom I had immersed during one of the meetings when she had come over to visit in Windsor, Ontario. It was a rich experience to see her now in her native land.

One day I discovered a huge bookstore on Charles IV Bridge in Edinburgh. It was a half-block long and stocked only used religious volumes, thousands upon thousands of them. I went up one aisle and down another, reading titles and viewing works I had heard about for years and had never seen. I was like a country lad turned loose in a city candy store. I stayed all day until there was just time to go to historic Wallacestone for the evening meeting, after tea in the gracious home of David Dougal.

Our last week in Scotland was spent at Kirkcaldy. I have previously mentioned this as the place where Alexander Campbell had spoken a century before my first visit. Kirkcaldy was the birthplace of Adam Smith, who wrote *The Wealth of Nations***. He was greatly influenced by his close association with David Hume, and I have often wondered what Alexander**

Campbell had to say about Smith and Hume while he was in Kirkcaldy. He was familiar with both and expressed opposition to Hume's theory about the rights of man.

Nell and I stayed again in the hospitable home of the Mellises. On Saturday evening a welcome tea had been arranged at the meetingplace on Rose Street, and brethren came from Dunfermline, Leven, Pittenweem, and other towns in "the kingdom of Fife," as well as from the region across the Firth of Forth. The program was excellent. The hymns of praise lifted our spirits. So did the meat pies and biscuits (cookies) which we ate while talking as rapidly as we could about our marvelous relationship in our precious Lord. It was a season of refreshing from His very presence.

Our final day in "auld Scotia" was the Lord's Day. It is etched into my memory. I spoke at "the breaking of the bread" and remained to talk to the lads and lasses in the Sunday School in the afternoon. When we came out the rain was pounding the pavement. At the end of the street the sea was breaking against the wall with resounding slaps as the spume and spray leaped high. It was still raining hard at the time for the evening meeting but the house was filled. Some of the older men wore kilts of lovely plaid.

At the close of my talk three precious souls announced their desire to put on Christ in baptism. It was a time of rejoicing with tears of gladness. We said good-bye to one another, and walked out into the rainy night. All of us were aware that we would meet again some day where the light of the sun was not needed and the storm clouds would never rise.

4. The Beginnings of Change

Back Home from England

Contents

On May 28 we arrived in Yorkshire, the largest county in Great Britain. It was once the foremost manufacturing center of the world. We went to Leeds, which is famous for being in the midst of the textile industry. Fred and Hilda Hardy met us, and took us to the home of their son-in-law, Geoffrey Lodge. Almost every home in England has a name and Geoffrey and Bessie called theirs Maranatha. It was a constant reminder of the fact that the Lord is coming.

The next day two carloads of us drove through the beautiful Wharfe River Valley to the lonely Ilkley Moors. We left our cars and tramped through the wild gorse and bracken covered country. It is a land of grouse shooting. We heard the call of the curlews and saw the shaggy sheep which pasture on this awe-inspiring stretch of deserted country. As I looked back upon it from the car window my mind was full of "Wuthering Heights," by Emily Bronte, written about these same moors.

That night I spoke at Morley to a crowd which filled the little place of meeting. Geoffrey Lodge presided. We engaged in discussion with the Nazarene and Pentecostal folk who attended until we were late for dinner at the Thomasson home. After the dishes had been cleared away, we got our Bibles and talked about the Word until midnight. It came to me that this could be the strength of the Cause all over the earth, for little groups to

meet in homes and discuss frankly and without formality the truth from heaven.

The following day we drove to Knaresborough where a ruined castle looks down from the height where it has stood a thousand years. It was market day and this quaint town which looked like an illustration from a book of Mother Goose rhymes was crowded with stands and temporary little shops set up. We wandered through narrow winding streets and alleys, flanked by age-old buildings with slate roofs. Far below flowed the picturesque river. That evening found us at East Ardsley where I spoke at a gospel meeting presided over by Brother E. Worth. It was Memorial Day at home but no one knew that in England.

The next morning we departed for Tunbridge Wells, in Kent, the garden spot of southeastern England, bordering on the English Channel. The white cliffs of Dover have made it justly famous. The congregation was small and had an inadequate and poorly-situated meetingplace. It had been plagued by internal troubles, but under the guidance of Albert Winstanley and Ralph Limb had overcome them. I was in a ten-day series of meetings, during which Nell and I made our abode in the hospitable home of a beloved sister, Gertrude Hill. One man was restored, and one immersed. He was the thirtieth person I had baptized into Christ since crossing the ocean.

On the morning of June 13 we bade farewell to the saints in England. We boarded an early train for London, where we spent the day at the World's Fair which was then in progress. That evening we caught the boat train to Harwich, where we embarked on a steamer which landed us at Hook of Holland the next morning. We began a tour of historical sights in Holland, Belgium and France. It was an impressive time but I shall mercifully spare you the details.

We went aboard the great ship which was to bear us back home at Le Havre, and arrived in New York on the last day of

June. On our train trip back home I stopped at New Castle, Indiana, where a four-day mass meeting was starting which brought hundreds together from California to Pennsylvania. On the first night Adam Bruce and William Horrocks from Canada spoke. On Tuesday night I addressed a packed auditorium on "The Name of the Church." I took the position that the body of Christ was given no title, and did not need a distinctive name since it had no rivals. To name it was to denominate it, and thus to separate the family of God. This was my first attempt to state convictions which were beginning to form. Fortunately no one seemed to know what I was saying and those who mentioned it thought it was great. It was only later, after I became convinced from reading Alexander Campbell that I came to the conclusion that even the term "church" was a misnomer.

Three days after I arrived home in Saint Louis, Brother J. H. Mabery of Bonne Terre, Missouri left this world to be with Jesus. Fred Killebrew and I spoke words of comfort to the huge audience which had gathered in his honor. He had proclaimed the Word all during his long employment as the chief electrician for Saint Joseph Lead Company. Many men who had been assigned to work under him had been led to Christ. He had started several congregations of believers and we had worked together in weak places with full understanding and appreciation of one another. It was a grievous loss to me.

When the time came to return to Beech Grove, Arkansas, Darrell Bolin went with me. He spoke at Beech Grove and Evening Star. The attempted boycott was completely broken. Brethren came from nearly all congregations. Emotions were running high. One morning we received word to appear at the meetinghouse. When we arrived there were ten men there, including several elders and deacons from Paragould. Present also were Franklin Puckett and G. K. Wallace. When we entered the building and were seated, Brother Wallace took the floor and announced it was time to call my hand and he was there to do it.

He presented propositions he had drawn up on the preacher-pastor system and colleges. With a flourish he threw them down on the table and demanded that we put up or shut up. I waited for a minute while the awed silence seemed like an eternity. I slowly arose and walked to the pulpit. Looking the brethren in the face I said I would accept the offer to debate and the propositions as drawn. I proposed that we include a discussion of the scripturality of an evangelist looking after and exercising oversight of a congregation he had planted until elders could be developed and ordained. I felt this needed some clarification. Brother Wallace in a meeting at Paragould which was held to stop my inroads into the southland had misrepresented my position on the question. It was agreed to include it.

We decided to not have moderators but to allow each man to be responsible for his own conduct. Each of us was to choose a timekeeper. I agreed to meet Brother Wallace anytime, and his supporters selected the week containing the Fourth of July the following year. We announced the debate that night. The interest in it was intense, and many regretted that it was so far in the future. As one old brother put it, "We are ready to see the fur fly now and it looks like the best thing to do would be to put the two of you up on the stand and let you go at one another!"

I was really too busy to think much of the debate or to make preparation for it. On August 7 I began a one-week study at Farmington, Missouri, during which one was immersed. On September 9 Ellis Crum and I entered into a series of meetings at Independence, Missouri, and it was at Eureka congregation, a fine rural group near Meadville, Missouri, close to the home of General John J. Pershing at Laclede. On October 7 I began at Nixa, Missouri, in the Ozarks, the scene of so many meetings in my earlier days. James Baysinger led the singing and did a marvelous job. We immersed 22 in the three meetings.

The fall and winter months were filled with activity. Three

things stand out in my mind as I review events. First, the amount of training of men in various congregations. The Saint Louis Bible Study began November 5 with students from many states. E. M. Zerr came for three lectures on Prophecy. But there were special studies and training classes all over the United States. Brethren were being developed to edify, to do personal work, and to share the Good News.

Second, the continuing contact by mail with the saints in Great Britain. There were letters and articles from England, Scotland and Ireland. Many of these were from humble saints who had come to love Nell and me. They wrote about their families and what was happening in their congregations. We answered them all immediately. They sent calendars and shortbread and other things at Christmas. It was several years before the correspondence dropped away and finally slowed down to a trickle. Death was taking its toll of those who had met us. It meant much to hear from these precious ones.

Third, the intensification of feeling in the southland because of the coming debate. Brethren in many congregations who had entertained grave doubts about the rise of the clergy system began to surface. As they did so, local preachers felt forced to speak in defense of their position publicly. This only served to increase suspicion that something was wrong. But it gave the Baptist Church a respite from attack. Since I was regarded as the greatest enemy to the church in this generation, my name began to be heard with increasing frequency in sermons. It appeared in bulletins, in tracts, on the radio, and even in public advertisements in newspapers as brethren sought to stifle and kill my influence before people had even heard me.

H. F. Sharp of Blytheville, Arkansas, took up the cudgel with an article in the October issue of *Gospel Guardian***. He titled it, "Reckless Reporting by the Saint Louis Pope." In it he called me, among other things, a heretic, a troublemaker, and a pope. He accused me of malicious falsehood, divisive teaching,**

damnable heresy, and preaching filth. All of this was because of my conviction relative to the ministry of all the saints and the priesthood of all believers. Our brother only served to inflame the issue and to encourage others who had never met me to inveigh against me.

For weeks I became the subject of radio programs in Arkansas, Kentucky and South Missouri. Those who spoke against me had never met me. They had never read a word I had written. They operated purely on hearsay. Some of them were contradictory. But they sought to prejudice the minds of men against me. The preachers all expected to attend the debate but they did not want the "common people" to come. It was alleged that I could make black appear to be white, that I was a master brainwasher, and that what I said should go in one ear and out the other. It did not work as intended because many of those who heard resolved to come and listen to me out of curiosity.

At the time I had not yet formulated my present conviction that public debating of issues among brethren achieves but little lasting good. It would be several years before I would become bold and brave enough to hang up my verbal gloves and announce that my participation in such partisan encounters belonged to my days of spiritual immaturity. At the time I liked to debate. I liked the exchange of wit and repartee. I gloried in being chosen as a champion. I rejoiced in and responded to the audience reaction.

I made my preparation with full conviction that I was battling for the truth. I still believe that. I am not sure I was as prayerful as I ought to have been. I may have relied too much upon my own ability and knowledge. But I realized it was a battle to the death. One of the combatants was wrong, and one of us would lay his life on the line spiritually.

4. The Beginnings of Change

The Cow Pasture Debate

Contents

My first discussion with Brother G. K. Wallace has been referred to as "The Cow Pasture Debate." There was no place in the area large enough to accommodate the expected crowds, so brethren secured a huge tent and pitched it in a large field five miles north of Paragould. Hundreds of people came from many states. Hotels and motels for miles around were filled to capacity. The debate began on June 30 and closed July 4. J. A. McNutt was selected as timekeeper for Brother Wallace. My uncle, L. E. Ketcherside, operated in the same capacity for me.

The first two nights Brother Wallace affirmed, "The employment of a preacher to preach for the congregation as now practiced by the church of Christ, at 2nd and Walnut Streets, in Paragould, Ark., is scriptural." The third night I affirmed, "The New Testament authorizes an evangelist to exercise authority in a congregation which he has planted until men are qualified and appointed as bishops." On the fourth night, Brother Wallace affirmed, "The organization, by Christians, of schools such as Freed-Hardeman College is in harmony with the New Testament scriptures." On the last night I affirmed that it was contrary to the New Testament scriptures.

It is not my intention to review the substance of the debate. It was put into print and can be read in its entirety. Brother Wallace was a worthy opponent. A typical "Church of Christ"

debater, he was constantly watching for a chance at the jugular. He knew all of the debater's tactics, was witty and sharp and one did not dare to let down his guard. I think his weakest moments came in his dealing with the difference between preaching and teaching and gospel and doctrine. He read the wrong definitions from both Thayer's Lexicon and Webster's Dictionary.

There were scores of preachers present, many representing both positions. A few did not have clearcut ideas about either. Each afternoon public meetings were held at Beech Grove. In these any brother could say anything upon his heart by way of strength and edification. It was decided that no discussion of or reference to the debate would be made in these meetings. It was probably the greatest array of public talent ever assembled at Beech Grove. Every meeting was stimulating and uplifting.

The debates drew people from the area who came as Puritans would attend a bear-baiting, or those south of the border would go to a cock-fight. Not too many of them understood the issues but they liked the excitement. This was evidenced when men gathered in country stores like the one at Hooker's Switch. The question of the debate came up as they sat talking on the front porch, and one old resident said, "Well, for my money, that Baptist from Saint Louis is giving that Campbellite about all he needs."

One of the greatest blessings which came to me during the debate was to meet Leroy Garrett. Students from David Lipscomb College called him in Dallas after the first night of debate, urging him to come. He deeply impressed me when I first shook hands with him. We held much in common but we also differed in our concepts regarding many items. We had been reared in different areas. I did not know the brethren with whom he had worked. He did not know the ones with whom I had labored. But both of us knew Jesus, and because of Him we wanted to know each other better.

It was only a short time later when he called me from Winfield, Alabama, where he was in a tent meeting. I went down to spend several days with him in the small hotel. There, in the presence of three David Lipscomb College students, we explored the points upon which we differed for three whole days. We began talking early in the morning and continued until late at night, merely taking time out to go to the tent for meeting. The people in the community did not know what was taking place as we sought to understand one another and the Word of God. Later we set up meetings in homes in Dallas, and then decided to widen the scope and invite all to participate. These were some of the most profitable and soul-searching experiences of my life.

Two weeks after the debate I returned to Beech Grove for two weeks. Each afternoon we held a two-hour session of Bible study. It was open, free and positive. It was generally agreed the debate had helped our cause. People from many other congregations came to hear and be blessed. An instructor from Harding College came to lead the singing. Brethren from various parties came and went away without rancor. The little congregation now had a reputation all over the United Sates. It had refused to roll over and play dead!

Before I leave the debate I must tell you of what happened to our antagonists later on. G. K. Wallace who was a Bible teacher at Florida College left the school and turned against it. Franklin Puckett who came with him to issue the challenge split with Brother Wallace and died on the other side of a rift which knew no reconciliation. The two congregations in Paragould whose preachers signed the article in *Firm Foundation* sounding the alarm that I had invaded the south, fell out with one another. My uncle and I attended a debate between them at 2nd and Walnut. The alienation exists to this day. Many of the preachers who attended the debate have since become involved in another schism and are attacking each other.

I am not glad these things happened. They are a built-in

part of the System. There will be trouble in every congregation eventually. There will be new divisions in every generation. All of the programs, all of the excitement, all of the hullabaloo, will not prevent it. Legalism leads to division. It can lead nowhere else for men in the flesh. So long as men substitute love of law for the law of love trouble is waiting in the wings. It will come in on cue. Church of Christism is like any other "ism."

Four days after the debate finished, Brother D. Austen Sommer died of a heart attack as he sat in his home in Indianapolis, Indiana. He was born in Kelton, Pennsylvania, on March 28, 1878, and was 74 years of age. His departure brought home to me the fact that the generation of those who had influenced my younger years in the faith was retreating into the shadows. The Sommer family, which once exercised such an influence in the northern states was disappearing. Composed of men who knew the Book but who were jealous of each other, they had fragmented both their family and congregations throughout the land. Yet it was sad for me to see them die disillusioned and forlorn.

In October, 1952, Brother Garrett launched a monthly journal called *Bible Talk***. In his initial editorial he wrote: "We feel that institutionalism and professionalism are teammates in that inauspicious game of apostasy into which they have enticed the church." He proposed to expose them for what they were, while at the same time dealing with worldliness, health habits, use of leisure time, the Christian home and worship. It was quite a sizable order for a paper.**

The first issue bore a picture of the youthful-looking editor and Ansel Chandler of Tyler, Texas, wrote that he was a graduate of Freed-Hardeman College, Abilene Christian College, Southern Methodist University, Princeton University and Harvard University. *Bible Talk* **was the forerunner for** *Restoration Review* **and did much to define issues confronting a great segment of the restoration movement sparked by the**

Campbells and their contemporaries.

The 1953 *Mission Messenger* featured a series of articles by Albert E. Winstanley, on various topics. At the same time I started one on "The Elders of the Church." There were twelve articles about the bishops dealing with an in-depth study of their qualifications, selection and appointment. The January issue carried a picture and an account of the golden wedding anniversary of Brother and Sister W. E. Ballenger. He had begun preaching two years after I was born and had planted new congregations all over the central states. Meticulous in dress and with shoes shined like a mirror, he had endeared himself to rural and village people because of his genial attitude. Some of them said he could walk through mud and none of it would dare rub off on him.

In February I went to Valdosta, Georgia at the invitation of brethren who had attended the debate. My mission was to visit and talk with preachers and others in the area. It was the first time I had been that far south, but I knew that Valdosta was the home of Jessie F. Love who had visited us in Missouri shortly after my father was immersed into Christ. He was a curiosity in our village with his broad southern dialect. I located his wife who was still living in Valdosta.

I talked with Joe Goodspeed, minister at Remerton, and Evans McMullen who was laboring at Hahira. Both were graduates of Florida Christian College. Other brethren came from Florida, Alabama and other parts of Georgia to converse with me. We met in a home and talked until midnight every day.

On January 24, J. A. Freed died at Topeka, Kansas, at the age of 77 years. The day of his death was also that of his 49th wedding anniversary. He had been a friend of our family for many years and was a relative of the brother Freed who founded the college at Henderson, Tennessee. J. A. Freed had proclaimed the gospel for a half century, and was well known.

On February 20 I began a series of Bible studies in the American Legion hall in Paragould, Arkansas, despite a good deal of opposition. I was on the radio daily discussing trends in the religious world. The result was that our crowds were good, reaching a total of 150 in many sessions. In the April issue of our paper I announced that I was scheduled for studies in Texas, Tennessee, and Georgia during that year. The increasing number of calls made it impossible to continue the Saint Louis studies. We cancelled them after fifteen years of continuous teaching.

During the Arkansas debate, Sterl Watson, who was preaching for the West End Church of Christ in Saint Louis, arose and issued a challenge for me to debate Brother Wallace on the same issues in Saint Louis. Being satisfied with the Arkansas encounter, I saw little use of a repetition of the debate. But before Brother Watson left Arkansas for Saint Louis he announced that he was coming to the city to run me out of it, so when he repeated the challenge to the congregation at Manchester Avenue there was little we could do except to agree to another debate.

Each congregation appointed a committee to work out the details and it was agreed that I would debate Brother Wallace in Carpenter's Hall October 26-30. It was decided that the debate would again be printed and thus four of my discussions would be in book form.

5. The Change Continues

The Stormy Fifties

Contents

Anyone who reads the history for 1953, of the particular restoration attempt to which we are heirs, will surely recognize that this year represented a peak in the battle between those who advocated a mutual ministry of all the saints and those who defended a professional ministerial caste. Although the central issue was the rise of a clergy system, there was always in the background the question concerning the right of disciples of the Master to create and endow human organizations to develop a special class of men who hire themselves out to congregations on a contractual basis to feed them.

It was a year of high tension manifested in public debates. We were attacked in articles in papers from whose columns we were barred and in which we could make no defense. Walter Henderson, at 2nd and Walnut, in Paragould, Arkansas, kept up a running fire against me in his little weekly paper called *Pause, Ponder and Profit***. Guy N. Woods devoted an article to me in** *Gospel Advocate***. G. C. Brewer, who was as dignified in error as when he held the truth, stooped a little from his high plane and let loose a barrage in the same paper. He was perturbed because I held a meeting in Rutherford County, Tennessee, without consulting with George W. DeHoff of Murfreesboro and clearing it with him. I wrote a reply but Brother B. C. Goodpasture returned it with a note that my writings could not be published in his journal.**

Glenn L. Wallace made a vitriolic attack on Leroy Garrett in the April 30 issue of *Gospel Guardian*. Rex A. Turner wrote an "Open Letter to Leroy Garrett" which was published on the editorial page of *Gospel Advocate*, for February 12. His opening sentence read: "Now that some of the details of certain maneuvers are in, the evidence points to the fact that you are definitely opening up a front for W. Carl Ketcherside and Sommerism here in the South." Leroy filed a reply. After a month went by he wrote to Brother Goodpasture and asked him why it had not appeared. In a letter which Leroy published, Brother Goodpasture ignored the question of the personal attack published in his own paper. But the *Gospel Advocate* had an editorial in the March 19 issue which said: "We do not feel that we are obliged to furnish a medium for radicals and hobbyists to ventilate their hobbies, nor are we obligated to become an agency for the dissemination of error. It is not our remotest intention to give brotherhood publicity to every hobbyrider and his fancies."

Brother J. W. Roberts, of Abilene Christian College, entered the arena through the pages of *Firm Foundation*. He was disturbed by Leroy's "peculiar ideas," and said, "Brother Leroy's ability and training deserve better things than the use to which he is putting them." Leroy pointed out that the Greek scholars, both Christian and otherwise, agreed with his position.

All of these men who took up the cudgel were eminent in "Church of Christ" circles. The fact that they felt pressured into writing against us, and even had to misrepresent our position, gave us the courage to press on. This was an indication that what was said was being read, that people were being made to question some of the entrenched practices. Although these men had been very active in debating with Baptists, Methodists and others, now they were being forced to defend what they had. For the first time in their history it was being demanded that they "preach what they practiced."

April 14-17 found Leroy Garrett and Floyd I. Stanley in a debate in Cowden Junior High School auditorium in Midland, Texas. The proposition was: "The Scriptures teach that a congregation of the Church of Christ with elders may employ a gospel preacher to serve as the minister of the congregation at a regular salary." Brother Stanley was the minister of the Southside Church of Christ in Midland. Reports from those in attendance universally mention his sarcasm and abusiveness, and Brother Garrett's calm and dignified demeanor.

On June 30-July 2, L. E. Ketcherside of Peoria, Illinois, debated Obert Henderson, of Walnut Ridge, Arkansas, at Peoria. The propositions dealt with the organization of Christian colleges and the work of evangelists. Those favoring the views of Brother Henderson absented themselves from the debate. He could not get one of the brethren to even come and keep time for him. I moderated and kept time for both men. The debate was very gentlemanly. Brother Henderson proved himself to be a person of real Christian character and demeanor. Later I became better acquainted with him and we enjoyed a real sense of fellowship in the Spirit.

My second debate with Brother G. K. Wallace was held in Saint Louis, November 26-30. It attracted hundreds from fifteen states and Canada. In addition to the debate two sessions were held daily at the Manchester Avenue meetinghouse. Those who presided over these sessions by invitation of the elders were L. E. Ketcherside, Peoria, Ill.; Vernon W. Hurst, Bristol, W. Va.; Hershel Ottwell, Hartford, Ill.; and Fred Killebrew, Senath, Mo. Brethren from everywhere were free to speak. They considered such questions as: What sectarian tendencies among us need to be eliminated? What scriptures are commonly misapplied? What are the bases for fellowship and disfellowship? What factors are essential to a complete restoration of the primitive order? These sessions were highly practical and free from controversy.

The debate itself was one of the most interesting in which I have been involved. Brother Wallace had argued himself into a dilemma. In Arkansas he contended vociferously there was no difference between preaching and teaching and between gospel and doctrine. He was on record as being opposed to any human organization to preach the gospel such as the missionary society. It was easy to prove from Florida Christian College bulletins that it was a human institution and that it existed to teach doctrine set forth in the new covenant scriptures. Brother Wallace was thus caught participating in and defending the scripturality of a human institution to preach the gospel.

He either had to take the position there was a difference between preaching and teaching and between gospel and doctrine, or else withdraw his opposition to the missionary society, as a human institution to preach the gospel. Later I learned from brethren who were present in the daily conclaves in which they sought to patch up the matter for Brother Wallace that the preachers knew they were hard hit. Their consolation lay in the fact that if Brother Wallace spoke forcefully and loud and hit his chart with the pointer the brethren might overlook the corner into which he had driven himself. He did both but it did not work!

As soon as that debate ended I had to start preparing for another. It was with Flavil L. Colley and was held in Beckley Theater at Dallas, Texas, December 1-4. It was limited to the scripturality of hiring a minister of a congregation having elders "as generally practiced among the churches of Christ in Dallas." Attendance was excellent and behavior above reproach. The debate was put into print and can be read in those libraries which have preserved such accounts of what transpired.

Before we close the account of debates we need to mention two more, which were held in 1954. One was conducted in Ivanhoe Temple, Kansas City, Missouri. It featured Leroy Garrett and Bill J. Humble. Pat Hardeman was the moderator

for Brother Humble. Carroll Wrinkle served in the same capacity for Brother Garrett. To me, one of the outstanding things about this debate, which drew large audiences of eager listeners, was the question about the content of the gospel, whether the gospel was designed to be preached to the saved. Can the saved be evangelized? Despite the careless writings on this theme, it is ignorance with regard to it which underlies so many grave problems in the whole world of believers in Jesus as God's Son. It is the foundation of many of our own tragic and disappointing deviations from the divine purpose. The rise and development of a special clergy, the multiplication of divisive parties, the whole question of fellowship are all linked to it.

Brother Garrett debated George W. DeHoff at Nashville, Tennessee, June 1-4. The debate was conducted in a large tent pitched on Caldwell Lane, not far from David Lipscomb College. Pat Hardeman moderated for Brother DeHoff. Henry Clay Grayson moderated for Brother Garrett. From his very first speech Brother DeHoff seemed intent upon turning the debate into a burlesque. He dealt in personalities and it was obvious he was out to destroy anyone who opposed his practice. After the debate Pat Hardeman sought me out to tell me that the two of us would have to meet in a debate on the issues to end all debates. The time never came.

We were engaged in other things besides debating. In January of 1954, Leroy and I attended the David Lipscomb College Lectureship at Nashville. It was my pleasure to spend several hours with the venerable James A. Allen, editor of *The Apostolic Times***. He was seventy years old but his memory had not dimmed. He gave me a great many insights into the causes of modern defections within the church. I could see that a great many problems stemmed from the ambitions for leadership of men who allowed pride to rule their lives.**

Leroy and I went to visit Brother B. C. Goodpasture in his office, and later in his home. Everything was cordial. We

presented to him a proposal for a panel discussion by representative men dealing with principles and not personalities. He could not see the wisdom of it and preferred going on as we had with him printing but one side of an issue. The lectureship turned out to be a mediocre presentation.

The following month Nell and I attended the lectureship at Florida Christian College at Temple Terrace, near Tampa. The theme was "Persistent Problems in Preaching." Featured were men such as Basil Overton, J. A. McNutt, G. K. Wallace and Pat Hardeman. One night after the session a man stopped Nell and me just outside the tent. Within a few minutes about a hundred men were gathered around us. They began bombarding me with questions from every side with all of them talking at once. Franklin Puckett mounted a chair and began to quiz me while many others were talking at the top of their voices.

I told them I would talk to anyone whom they chose but would not become a part of such a hullabaloo as they were engaging in. Since Brother Puckett already had "the chair," they nominated him. We talked about two hours and no one left. Occasionally someone would yell out a question and had to be reminded of the agreement. I left about midnight feeling good. Some of those who had started out so bravely were silenced.

We were in Birmingham, where we spent three days in the home of O. C. Dobbs, Sr. I visited a number of people including John T. Lewis. We had a long discussion about the clergy system and our brother attended one night when I spoke. Brother Dobbs took the floor after I had finished and proposed an open forum on the issues in Birmingham. Brother Lewis opposed it strongly. He felt that he could speak for the congregations in Birmingham.

The year of 1954 drew to a close with a great deal of excitement prevailing. The status quo had been disturbed and men hardly knew what to do!

5. The Change Continues

Years of Change

Contents

The time has come to try and describe the four most formative years of my life. They were years of change, of study, deep meditation and fervent prayer. They were years of fear mingled with faith. In them I came closer to God than I had ever drawn before. Actually, this period had begun on that Easter Monday in 1951 when I spoke at the little village of Ahorey, in North Ireland, at invitation of the Presbyterian leaders. I stood on the platform where Thomas Campbell had ministered before coming to America.

However, I returned to the United States to engage in debates with brethren. The heady excitement of combat in the forensic arena made it impossible for me to study deeply or to think clearly about the will of God for my future life. But between the years of 1953 and 1957 a great transformation took place.

Out of it came my article "That They All May Be One" in the January issue of *Mission Messenger* for 1957, and the even more trenchant "Thoughts on Fellowship" in January 1958. These were the initial public presentations of the thoughts which had begun to lodge in my heart. They represented my crossing of the Rubicon, the burning of my bridges behind me. They were the first guns fired in my commitment to an unrelenting war against sectarianism, and especially against my own.

During those years I learned the stern discipline of research and study. I read every word of the five volume Lard's Quarterly, the seven volume Christian Baptist, and as many bound volumes of the Millennial Harbinger as were available to me. It became apparent to me that we had departed so far from the original spirit and intent of the restoration ideal that it was a travesty upon justice to claim that we were the same movement. It soon became obvious to me that no splinter of the movement was the one holy, catholic and apostolic church of God upon earth, and that all of our fragmented groups taken together did not constitute the body of Christ in its fullness.

I was able to distinguish between the body as a divine organism conceived in the mind of God, and movements within it launched by the thinking of men like Luther, Calvin, Wesley, Campbell or Stone. It became apparent that the first great error of the heirs of the reformers was the equating of the movement with the Lord's church, thereby adding another religious party or sect to the already overburdened landscape. I became convinced that we had not achieved the original purpose of uniting the Christians in all the sects. The magnificent myth which had driven us on relentlessly to war against all sectarianism but our own was the fantasy that we were exclusively the body of Christ upon earth. It was a solemn thought to me that I had brothers and sisters meeting behind other signboards, and that we were saved by a Savior and not by a signboard. My growing conviction led to the article "The Sheep on the Hills." I could see that God's flock was scattered and not yet gathered.

I was led to investigate within their context every scripture I had ever employed to justify division among the saints of God. It was a frightening experience. As I read Amos 3:3; 6:5; Romans 16:17; I Corinthians 1:10; II Thessalonians 3:6, and other such passages and saw how we had wrested them, I began to wonder if I had ever been right upon anything. One after another my usage of such passages was taken from me. I began

to mistrust my judgment. I was driven to my knees and sought the understanding of God's will with tears. I wept much to realize that at the very time when I thought I was serving Him I was actually dividing His children by my interpretations. It was several years before I wrote the first edition of my book "The Twisted Scriptures" but all of the time the Spirit of God was illuminating me as I surrendered more and more to His claims. I was driven to Him by loneliness for in those days there was no one else to whom I could talk.

It was a difficult thing to overcome pride and ambition. I had been for so long a recognized leader of a faction in the religious complex that I sought for some way to hold on to my past and maintain integrity with the present. One day, after months of introspection I sat down at my desk and wrote, "I have been in the wrong about fellowship all my life. Today I renounce that wrong. I will no longer try to make my increasing knowledge consistent with my past teaching. That teaching was in error." I recall as if it were yesterday how I felt when I read what I had written. It was as if fetters had been struck from my mind. New insights began to flood my soul so fast I could hardly write them down. It was as if a dam had broken inside me. I have never felt quite so clean and pure as I did that day.

People began to write and tell me I had changed. To them that was the unpardonable sin. They equated our past position with the will of God and to leave our feeble human thought and go on to greater heights was forsaking the truth. They would quote for me things I had written in the past and ask me if I still believed them. To all of them I wrote, "You are right, I have changed, and as I learn new truths I will change again. I have signed my declaration of independence from all of the errors of the past, and I shall pray that God will open up your heart to renounce yours as I have mine."

I resolved that I would never again debate publicly with any brother. I would never again represent any party, sect or

schism. I would never again allow myself to be selected and thrust forward by the partisans of any school of thought to defend their opinions and deductions. I would stand or fall to my own master and I would allow all others to do the same. It came as a great relief to realize that never again would I have to spend weeks trying to figure out what an opponent might say and how I would parry his thrust. Since the moment I made my promise to the Father that I would never again debate, I have become increasingly convinced of the folly of attempting to arrive at truth or alleviate division by such a ridiculous procedure. If a community is not divided before a debate it will always be after one is held. The very psychology of our modern debating is divisive.

As I studied the past it became evident that men like myself who had learned new truths always made two errors. The result was an intensification of the sectarian spirit. In the first place, they left where they were and went with those who had taught them the new truth. This took the new truth out of the place where it was most sadly needed and put it in a place where it was already present. I resolved not to go anywhere but to stay where I was, regardless of what happened. If I could not serve God among those whom I knew best I would not be liable to do so among others.

Secondly, those who learned new truths usually tried to bind them upon others. In their joy at learning something meaningful to them they wanted to press it on everyone whom they met. Their new brainchild meant so much to them they wanted everyone else to become pregnant immediately. This always caused cleavages in the body. I resolved to share my ideas but never to allow them to become dogmas. I was resolute in my determination never to form a clique or club. As I wrote in my paper, I refused to be bought off or scared off and expected to remain where I was for the duration.

I urged all others to stay where they were until driven out.

It appeared to me that the way to unite was to unite. The way to halt division was to stop dividing. It seemed sensible that if everyone remained where he was this would preclude the formation of new parties, and while this would not lessen the number it would freeze them at the present level. It was my conviction that time would heal many of the breaches and bridge many of the chasms. In any event, the formation of new parties or sects, or the changing from one party to another would not achieve the purpose of God. To shift from one party to another does not eliminate problems. It only subjects one to new and unfamiliar problems with which he is not by experience qualified to deal.

I did not feel it was proper for me to continue without informing the brethren with whom I was laboring of my radical change of thought. The elders agreed to set up six two-hour periods on successive Saturday evenings and invite all who wished to come. I was to speak an hour and then answer questions from the audience for an hour. The meetings were well-attended and orderly, although somewhat tense. I loved and respected all of the brethren. I knew how they felt. I had taught them what they believed and had led them in its implementation. Now I was occupying the same speaker's platform to tell them I had been wrong.

I discussed with them the name of the church and told them it had no official title. The primitive *ekklesia* represented the called-out ones and they were known, not by a title, but by their love for one another. They were identified by where they met, and we should name the place so we could find them geographically, but not name the church to distinguish it from other believers, for that meant to denominate it.

I dealt with the "five steps of salvation" and showed that we were not saved by climbing a little ladder into the kingdom. Rather we were drawn up by an "escalator." We simply took the step of faith and the grace of God, as an unseen power drew us

up into repentance and immersion into the precious Lord. It was His power and not ours which accomplished His purpose and we never left the faith we had in the beginning to go on to the next step.

I discussed the nature of worship and showed the folly of "five acts of worship" when everything that one did on earth under the sovereignty of Jesus was an expression of worship. Under Jesus there are no holy places, holy days or holy things, but only a holy people. I discussed the nature and composition of the one body and showed that it was composed of every person on earth who had answered the call of God. We should not ask people, "Which church are you a member of?" because there is only one. There never has been another and never will be. Our purpose should be to receive all whom God receives and as He received them.

I showed the differences between the gospel and the doctrine. The gospel consists of seven historical facts. The testimony to these must be believed. The doctrine consists of a course of instruction. It refers to that which is taught. It requires understanding and rationalization. We are saved by faith, not by how much we learn and know, but by whom we know. It was also pointed out that God probably did not respect any of our lines of demarcation and division because He did not create them. We like them because they gave us a sense of security, but it was a false security based upon human opinion.

We did not lose a person. I am working today with the same congregations with which I have always worked. And I am welcome in hundreds more. Through the grace of God, with few exceptions, the places where I had worked outgrew their narrow and inclusive views in the Saint Louis area, and are as comforting to me as I try to be to them as we grow older in years and in the faith.

5. The Change Continues

What Happens When You Change

Contents

I have often been asked about the effect of my changing convictions upon the party of which I had been one of the leaders. That, of course, is always the crux of any change. In the Saint Louis area where brethren could question me personally and where they could observe the life of Nell and myself, all of us continued to grow together in love. It was not quite so tranquil in other parts of the country. As I began to expose my changing views there was first astonishment and then resentment.

I had been a leader in opposition to the "Rough Draft" as presented by Chester and Allen Sommer in Indianapolis, Indiana. I had worked with their brother, D. Austen Sommer, in salvaging a "faithful church." Later when problems arose with the latter I had again been a leader in what we called "preserving the faith." Now I was saying the faith revealed in the Book was greater than, and not even related to our petty problems. Indeed, I was beginning to intimate that it was not only supremely above the Sommer movement, but the whole Campbell movement. The body of Christ as viewed by God was infinitely superior to all of our hassles and wrangles about means, methods and machinery. I suggested that He might not have been with us in any of our debates and controversies.

At first the opposition was an undercurrent. I would hear rumors of speeches delivered in various places opposing my

concept of fellowship. Occasionally someone would write me that his congregation had received a warning against me. I was no longer sound in the faith. It was suggested that I might be losing my mind and that much learning had made me mad. I was not invited to speak at a few gatherings where I had once been welcomed. As the spirit of opposition gradually began to crystallize and to surface in order to protect itself, it became centered in three men among the older brethren— E. M. Zerr, Roy Loney and C. R. Turner.

Brother Loney was a good writer but was completely deaf. His speaking was greatly affected by his condition, and he was very difficult to understand. He had been alienated from his family and isolated from the brethren for some years because of his involvement in local church troubles. I went to Colorado and offered him the opportunity to write for Mission Messenger. He readily accepted. However, he had grown up in an age of preacher rivalry and church trouble, and was happiest when engaged in a running feud by mail. My changing views presented him another opportunity. He wrote letters to brethren whom he deemed weak in Saint Louis and sought to woo them into allowing him to come and start a "faithful church" and gather the dissidents together. They brought the letters to me and we ignored them.

Brother Turner's influence was limited and hurt by his own judgment. Possessed of an inflexible spirit, and being radical by nature, he felt called upon to try and drive brethren to see things as he did. Wherever he went he assailed "the new doctrine on fellowship." He was especially embittered by my emphasis on love as the solution of all of our problems and ridiculed it publicly whenever he could.

Brother Zerr was possessed of the greatest knowledge of the Book of any man among us. Every year, after his wife died, Nell and I had him come and stay with us for at least two weeks at Christmas time. He liked our children and enjoyed the spirit

of gaiety which they created when they came home. I had edited and published his large book *New Testament Questions* and had also brought out the six volume commentary which he wrote. We were close to each other and I arranged for him to speak in congregations in the Saint Louis area.

He was a columnist for our little journal, writing a monthly article, "Word Studies in the Bible." He was adept at this kind of thing and had his articles in on time every month. As I began to air my developing views he became uncomfortable at appearing in the same paper with me. More and more it was apparent in his column that he was attempting to shore up our traditional partisan position. This was evident in his column for March 1958 when he wrote on the words "Heresy and Faction." The same issue carried two articles of mine. One was titled "The Party Spirit." Some have said it was the most keenly analytical article I have ever written. The other article was another installment of "Thoughts on Fellowship."

It was this series which Brother Zerr could not allow to go unchallenged. He wrote me that he could not continue to write for the paper unless he was permitted to write about my fallacies. I replied that I would welcome anything he said which would point out my error, and nothing he wrote would keep me from loving him. Accordingly, he announced his intention of dealing with my views in the August issue of 1958 in an article entitled "Preface." The intensity of his feeling was shown by his concluding words, "I am not vain enough to think I can 'stem the flood' of this disastrous movement. But I know that I can clear my conscience by raising my voice and hand against another incipient gash in the body of Christ."

In an editorial note I said, "We cherish the right for Brother Zerr to differ with our views, and we will provide him the same opportunity to be heard as we ask for ourselves. He may set forth any view he holds in this paper. . . . The fact that our brother, or any other brother, disagrees with us will make

no difference in our treatment of him. We will demonstrate one time in history that there is room in the fellowship of God for brethren to differ in love."

It was obvious that I now faced the first real test of my view that love was the ultimate dynamic which could maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. For the first time I was committed to a wholly new approach to dealing with those who differed with me. I examined my own heart and found out that I was not shamming it. I loved these brethren in spite of their human weaknesses and mine. I resolved not to hurt their influence nor put a stumblingblock in their way. I would simply be true to Jesus. I would correct any mistakes which they sustained by evidence and apologize for any wrong.

I published all that Brother Zerr wrote. I replied as gently as possible. The result was that brethren had both sides of the controversial thinking before them in the same issue of the paper. I felt deeply that the things I was writing would some day be generally accepted. I was content to plant and water. I would "learn to labor and to wait," and allow time, the great arbiter, to validate what I was saying. As for the present I must be true to increasing knowledge regardless of consequences.

We escaped without a formal split, for which I have ever been thankful. It is true that some brethren with whom I had labored branded me a Benedict Arnold. Of course they knew little about what I was doing and nothing about Benedict Arnold. In private letters I have seen since, I was referred to as a traitor. None of these things moved me nor did I count my life dear unto myself. I knew the brethren did not realize the scope of what I was saying and they were angry, thinking I had left them. Actually I did not leave anyone. My only sin was the receiving of all God's children as my brothers. I did not consider that loving others more meant that I loved those with whom I had been associated any less. I moved out of the stagnant pool of backwater into the mainstream of God's mercy and love.

In these days I am constantly running into good brothers and sisters whom I knew in olden days. They would have nothing to do with me then. But many of them have now become less sure that they have a perfect understanding of all truth. They have seen their children and grandchildren drift away from the cold, calculating legalism which we then equated with the will of God. It has shaken them. They have mellowed and become more open. Some of them are now members of groups about which they condemned me when I suggested there might be Christians among them.

I have learned one thing which has proven valuable for me. When problems arise, if one can avoid saying too much about them in their initial stages he will not have so much to retract later on. Human pride often interferes with our acknowledgment of wrong and congregations which choose sides actually create the "sides" by their choosing. All matters are better when handled with cool heads and warm hearts than with hotheads and cold hearts.

On Labor Day weekend in 1958 occurred a meeting of great significance. It was held in the little city of Nowata, Oklahoma, and was arranged by my brother Paul who presided over it. Hundreds of brethren gathered from several states. It was a rich time in sharing. Featured was a discussion of instrumental music in relation to fellowship. Participants were Seth Wilson, Don DeWelt, Leroy Garrett and myself. The format proved to be excellent. There were three sessions of two hours each.

5. The Change Continues

Lava From Above

Contents

It was John Milton who called death "the golden key that opens the palace of eternity." As I think of 1959-60 I am impressed with how often that key opened the palace door for older persons whom I loved. Then I recall that I was fifty-two years of age and those of the preceding generation were ripe for the reaper's scythe. It is not in a morbid spirit but simply to keep the record straight that I mention a few of those whom "the great leveler" called home to be with Christ in this brief period.

There was John Egarian, who died at Riverside, California, at the age of 94. He was born in Betios, Syria, 14 miles from Antioch, on February 22, 1865. He learned to speak Armenian, Turkish and Arabian, but English was too much for him. He became skilled in silkworm culture, and was a consultant on silk production and manufacture while mayor of his city for many years. I baptized him and his good wife, with several others in the Armenian colony in 1939. He was 74 at the time and we had to speak through an interpreter.

On March 14, A. E. McClaflin, an elder at Bicknell, Indiana, died of a heart attack. I had stayed in his home many times, and the hours were spent in discussion of the word. His wife, Bessie, was a talented writer. For years she did a column for the *Apostolic Review* **called "Leaves from a Rose Retreat," as their lovely home was called. Upon two occasions we had stayed**

up all night long talking about the Bible.

On June 16, J. W. Watts, Nell's father died. I was very close to him. Born in the Ozark hills he had grown up with little formal schooling. He came to the mining area when it was rough and tough. He was baptized by Daniel Sommer and was thoroughly committed to Christ. Twice he had been elected mayor of the city of Flat River. He was universally respected through the area for his commonsense, fairness and justice. I conducted his funeral service before one of the largest audiences ever to attend such an event. That day we learned what it meant to sorrow not as others which have no hope.

Brother E. M. Zerr was seriously injured near Martinsville, Indiana, October 29. He had celebrated his 82nd birthday two weeks before. He drove his car on to the highway directly in the path of one that was coming. He lingered four months in a coma, never regaining consciousness. He died on February 22, 1960. During his lifetime he conducted 75 protracted studies of the Bible in depth. For years he was the query editor for the *Apostolic Review***. He was the only man in the restoration movement who had produced a commentary on the entire Bible. A great deal of it was written in our home. I had gone to see him a few months before his accident. He was very cold and formal toward me. He thought I had "left the faith" because I insisted that God's people were still scattered throughout the sectarian world.**

On the same day Brother Zerr died, a mutual friend of ours, James Vermillion, departed this life in Riverside, California. I first met him in Springfield, Missouri, when I arrived there at the age of fourteen to hold a tent meeting on north National Boulevard. I stayed in his home and played with the boys. In later years he got a thrill out of telling how he would have to come out and tell me it was time to come in and get washed up for the meeting.

On January 4, A. W. Harvey, died in Bloomington, Indiana, as the result of a stroke. He had been a friend of the Sommer family for years, although he was not that close to D. Austen Sommer, whom he regarded as extreme. He was widely known because of his authorship of a booklet called "Bible Colleges."

On February 6, Robert Brumback died of a cardiac condition, in Phoenix, Arizona, where he had gone upon the recommendation of his physician. He was author of two books which I published. One was "History of the Church Through the Ages." I proofread the 430 pages three times before publication. The other book was "Where Jesus Walked." It was the story of Brother Brumback's trip to the holy land.

On March 17, Dewey Copeland died of a heart attack at Valdosta, Georgia. I met him first at the debate with G. K. Wallace, near Paragould, eight years before. During the interval I had been in his home many times. He and his wife and daughter had made a trip with Nell and me to Banff and Lake Louise in Canada, returning by way of Yellowstone Park and the Black Hills. It seemed incredible that he was gone. Jim Mabery and I went by train to Georgia to conduct the funeral service. It was a vast crowd we addressed.

On July 5, W. Curtis Porter died in a Memphis hospital. He had known that he possessed a rare and incurable blood disease since 1942. When he first learned of the proposal of the brethren at Beech Grove to have me come to Arkansas, he bitterly opposed it. He spoke against me publicly and wrote letters trying to get the brethren to cancel my coming. He was the first one I met in my debate with Brother Wallace. Later, the two congregations in Paragould which opposed me so bitterly fell out among themselves. Brother Porter debated Guy N. Woods on institutionalism. It was while sitting in the audience listening to these two "pros" seeking to cut each other down that it dawned upon me how childish were the issues we were

debating. I went to see Brother Porter at his home a few months before his final hospitalization. He was courteous and kind. He told me that after seeing some of the actions of the brethren he was inclined to be more favorable to me than to them.

The saddest loss of all was that of my mother. She suffered a massive cerebral hemorrhage at Topeka, Kansas, on Lord's Day morning, August 21. She was 77 years old. All the way from Saint Louis to Topeka I caught myself thinking of bygone days. I recalled how, when we were little, Mom used to sing us Danish lullabies as she rocked us. I remembered teaching her to read English. And I lived again the days of poverty. Her children had been her whole life.

She had known hardship, toil and pain, but now it was all over. Gone were the lonely nights when my father was away preaching and she was home worrying about sick children. My brother Paul and I conducted the memorial service. When I said the final benediction and turned away from the grave where her body would return to dust beside that of my father to whom she had always been true, I suddenly realized that our children had no grandparents left.

Not everything was death, of course. There was renewed life on many fronts. Brother Garrett and I continued our Saturday sessions in Hartford, Illinois. We met one Saturday per month for six consecutive months in the fall and winter. The subjects were weighty but timely. Each of us spoke an hour in the morning. At noon the sisters served an excellent meal and we all ate together. In the afternoon we took questions from the audience for two hours. We did not always agree but we loved one another and all of us learned. Out of these meetings grew the Hartford Forum, now the Saint Louis Forum. It has been one of the greatest influences in creating respect across party lines.

It was early in 1959 that we set up luncheon meetings at a restaurant in Springfield, Illinois, once per month. We met to

discuss the implementation of God's will. The first one found 35 brethren from Churches of Christ and Christian Churches together. Brother Garrett presided. The theme was "How Can We Work Together For the Cause of Christ?" We met as friends and not as enemies. The next month more than 40 were present. It was a kind of daring experiment in those days. Now it is routine in our area.

In the March issue of the *American Christian Review* **appeared an article over my signature entitled "A Statement of Fact." It was an apology for my actions in elevating "the Rough Draft," written in 1932, to a test of fellowship. I had reached the conclusion there was but one creed, the Lord Jesus Christ. To elevate an editorial statement of opinion into a test of union or communion was as absurd as it was wrong. I was particularly disturbed by the fact that we had summoned brethren from various sections of the country to a meeting in Kansas City, to take a stand on the issue. Such mass pressure seemed to me in retrospect to be sectarian. It smacked too much of church councils in history, all of which ended up producing a new creed.**

I began the series of articles on "Covenants of God." I had become convinced that God had revealed Himself as a covenant-making God. He made covenants with Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Later He made a covenant with Israel at Mount Sinai. They broke His covenant and He promised to make a new one. In it the motives and rules of action would be engraved upon the hearts of men. It became obvious that we were no longer under a written code. The new testament was not composed of twenty-seven books. The new covenant was a person. The apostolic epistles were not a code of jurisprudence. They were a collection of love letters written to believers in Jesus who were having difficulty imitating the Master.

My whole life was altered. Always before I had been laying down the law instead of living up to love. I had become a good lawyer and a poor lover. Now passages seemed to leap from the

pages into my heart. "The law was a custodian to bring us to Christ, but after faith is come, we are no longer under a custodian." Later this became the basis of my book "The Death of the Custodian." Now I had to wrestle with the fact that faith had come. We were no longer under a written code. Everything took on a new perspective. I began to understand the grace of God. I began to see that love was the fulfillment of law. And I began to walk in the Spirit.

I doubt that any other concept I have ever had since I accepted the invitation of Jesus and opened the door to my heart to let Him come in and sup with me, has had the profound effect upon me that the thought of a personal covenant with God has had. The church, redemption, reconciliation, worship, and all other facets of the life of faith took on new depths. Above all else it placed scripture in a completely new and proper context. It became a loving guideline along the road of life.

I began to read the Bible with new eyes. I began to meditate upon it with a new heart. What a blessing it was to realize that the verbal revelation of God was suspended from love for God and one's fellows. "On these two hang the law and the prophets." I could see that what we called the church was simply the called and gathered. It was a universal community of the reconciled. It was the kingdom of heaven doing the will of God on earth as it is in heaven.

It was still several years before I fully realized that the kingdom was alive and energetic. It was flowing relentlessly like lava from above. There had been no previous trough constructed. Its form was determined by the contour of the terrain. It was mind-boggling for a former legalist to realize the pattern was not determined by a book containing a written code but by the world itself. The kingdom must be flexible enough to move upon that world. The means, machinery and modes of service were dictated by raw human needs.

5. The Change Continues

The Cutting Edge

Contents

The advent of 1961 brought with it what might be the highest level yet attained in the discussion of fellowship. Of course, as we later honed our thinking, we were able to present the cutting-edge of it more fully. But I was writing on the theme with a great deal of power and brethren were anxious to hear of it. It was evident that it was an idea whose time had come. It was now ten years since I had my spiritual encounter in Ireland, and I had returned home to investigate the revelation of God's divine purpose in my life with fresh insights.

I was booked for meetings from coast to coast. In everyone of these I invited questions from the audience. So new was what was being said that the queries were many. This proved to be the most interesting and exciting part of the studies. As an illustration I will refer to a meeting in Sullivan, Indiana. The restoration movement there was fractured into four separate groups. I was invited by the smallest. The little building had standing-room only on Saturday night and on Sunday afternoon we moved to the Four-H Club building where there were 42 congregations and 14 preachers in attendance. And this was in the dead of winter, on January 14 and 15.

During the next two years I crossed and recrossed the country. The Missouri Christian Lectureship, a powerful forum in earlier days, was revived by Grayson Ensign, president of

Moberly Christian College. I spoke on "The Ground of Christian Fellowship." The speech has since appeared in a book and has been reproduced in a couple of booklets. It represented my most complete treatise on the subject up to that time.

Of special significance was an invitation to come to Louisville. It was issued by two congregations but was held at the Kentucky Avenue Church building. It was my first appearance among brethren of the pre-millennial persuasion. Brother E. L. Jorgenson was still alive and it was my pleasure to meet him and come to know him. The pre-millennial brethren had always been known for their freedom and openness toward others. I was well received and mutual love bridged any difference that existed. Later that year I went to Southeastern Christian College at Winchester, Kentucky, and spoke to the student body and friends of the college who came. We had a beautiful relationship and I returned to the college upon other occasions in the future.

As a result of these encounters I was invited to come to Shawnee Church in Louisville, where I held a meeting later in the year. Willis Allen was the minister and he proved to be a fine man and a great brother in the Lord. Through these contacts I came into contact with the brethren at Portland School and with those who carried on *The Word and the Work*. I became quite convinced that they had been misrepresented and unmercifully ill-treated by preachers of the dissenting view.

Not everything was rosy, however. It was during this year that Brother Roy Loney launched a new little journal called *The Gospel Message*. It was intended to provide a medium for those who thought I had departed from the faith. It did not create a new party but served to perpetuate an old one. Brother Loney had been invited to speak in Saint Louis in years gone by and he did his best to divide the brethren in Saint Louis and to gain a foothold. He wrote to a number of the brethren making false accusations and insinuations, but the letters were generally

handed to me and his efforts came to naught. The brethren who wrote to him were sympathetic because of his deafness and he took their sympathy for this to be sympathy with his divisive attitude. It was not.

One thing of especial interest that occurred during this time was arranged by Jim Mabery. He was a great brother and ardent for the work of Christ. Brethren arranged to celebrate my fortieth anniversary of preaching the Word with a "This Is Your Life" presentation at Green Parrot Inn, in Saint Louis County. Old friends attended I had not seen for years. A special recording for the session was sent by Brother Winstanley and some of the saints in Great Britain. Our children and their companions sang special numbers. There were several hundred present for the event and it was a thrilling experience master-minded by a professional. Anything Jim arranged was sure to be a success, and he had working with him his good wife, Ina Lee.

During the year word was received of the death of Walter Crosthwaite in Great Britain, on May 23. He passed across the Jordan at Ulverston, in Lancashire, and with his going I lost a precious friend and sensed the closing of an era. His noble stand for the purity of the gospel had earned for him the burning hatred of some, but the warm friendship of others. I cherish the memory of the time spent in his cheerful little home more than anything else which happened on my journey to England.

He was unshakable in his convictions and those who grew up at his feet were fortunate indeed. He spanned the time when the church was beginning to go off the deep end over the compromise with "liberal theology" and saw it become affiliated with the World Council. He was the leader of the Old Paths Brethren who resisted the drift of the tide. God needed such a man for such a time and raised him up. He and Levi Clark had a profound impression upon my life. I will never forget my association with them.

During the year I also went to Lakewood, California, for a meeting with the congregation there, which was ably shepherded by Bro. Bill Jessup. Lakewood was established by Ernest Beam, a pioneer in the attempt to unite the forces of the restoration movement. In my ignorance and the party spirit I had opposed his effort. He was hounded and harassed by men infinitely smaller than himself during his life and probably died of a broken heart, feeling that his efforts were a failure. They were not, of course, for the planting of the seeds of freedom is never a loss.

I studied his work intensely when I began to realize the merit of it and came to the conclusion he had made two mistakes in his method of going about it. I resolved to avoid those mistakes. Our meeting lasted five nights from October 16-20. More than 400 attended every meeting, crowding the little building to standing-room only. Every evening we had prayers for unity in a little room just off the patio. Some evenings the room was virtually full. The Vernon Brothers sang for the meeting. It was my first occasion to meet them. Harold Clark led the congregational singing. A busload of fifty came from Pepperdine College every night. The question periods each day were very lively. Some questions were earnest attempts to find a solution. Some preachers asked things only to disrupt. But God was with me and I found a ready answer for all.

It was about this time that Reuel Lemmons unleashed an attack upon me in the *Firm Foundation*. An excellent editorial writer and a man of tremendous ability, generally when he assailed a person in print, which he did very rarely, that person curled up and played dead. It is an outstanding phenomenon of the restoration movement how much power is centered in editors. A withering blast from one of them and you have had it. Brother Lemmons entitled his editorial in which he named me several times, "Blind in One Eye."

This time it did not work. It seemed rather to publicize my

effort to bring sanity to a body intent upon consuming itself. Thousands heard of me who did not know me before. I received scores of letters, many of them from Texas. It was apparent that many people were fed up with the sterile "status quo" and the establishment for which Brother Lemmons was one of the chief spokesmen. There was a grassroots yearning to become free from the domination of a self-imposed clergy group. An articulate coterie of brilliant young people was beginning to form which would make itself heard and felt.

The work was given impetus by a "Concourse Toward Unity" held at Denver, Colorado, July 1-7, which was attended by 500 people from 21 states, Mexico and the Philippines, to discuss the problems we faced in order to be united. M. F. Cottrell was one of the speakers. He fired the audience with new hope. Man after man spoke on the subject in a dynamic way. When it became apparent that there was a unity of purpose one of the congregations sent for C. E. McGaughey to come. He made a stereotyped speech demanding unity upon matters of opinion and stating there could be no unity without conformity. When he finished he knew that he had made a miserable failure.

Brother Cottrell and I invited him to have lunch with us. He reluctantly accepted. Brother Cottrell told him that he needed to come into the twentieth century and get off his hobby horse. Brother McGaughey said he intended to ride the horse right up to the gates of heaven. Brother Cottrell told him that if he did a voice from inside would tell him to tie his horse outside and come on in. There would be no hobbies in heaven. Conditions were changing when brethren from every segment of the movement could share together in love as they were doing there.

It was this year I was first invited to come to camp at Macrorie, Saskatchewan. Paul Tromburg was laboring at Outlook and I had visited the work there. At the time the men met in the daytime, but the evening meetings were open to the

sisters. The camp has since changed and is now a Family Camp with more than 200 registered. Back in those days it was heavily weighted with people from the non-instrument Churches of Christ, but it now involves about half of those who use the instrument and the other half of those who do not. It is sponsored by a congregation which has no instrument but does not make a test of fellowship out of it. The question is never mentioned by any speaker and causes no problem. It is a tremendous annual affair which brings together in a primitive setting brethren from almost every province in Canada, as well as from several states. I have returned almost every two years since that time and have seen great strides in our reception of one another in Christ. The interesting thing now is to see people from various other backgrounds coming and being treated with love.

On September 17-21 I was invited to Rosemead, California, for a fellowship forum by Robert E. Hanson. The house was packed every night. One evening two carloads of brethren drove in. They sat together around Glenn Wallace. When I had finished my speech, Brother Wallace arose and said I had insulted the Lord's church of which he was a member and he demanded an opportunity to reply. It shocked the audience. They could not think of anything I had said which could be so interpreted. I arose slowly, walked to the speaker's stand and looked at Brother Wallace for a long time with a smile upon my face. You could have heard a pin drop. I told him that if he felt offended he should be given an opportunity to reply, and that next afternoon he could do so for fifteen minutes.

The building was crowded to capacity the next day. I introduced Glenn and told the audience he had a few things to say. He put on quite a show, pounding the organ with his fist and declaring it was the real problem. When he finished his harangue, I simply ignored him, and arose and quietly said, "It is now time for questions from the audience. Who will be first, please?" Brother Wallace bounced out of his seat and asked if I

was going to answer him. I said, "No, I do not find anything which requires an answer, so we will proceed according to our regular format."

He and the seven others who came with him stalked out, murmuring something under their breath as they went. We proceeded with the meeting.

5. The Change Continues

A Letter From Abilene

Contents

It must have been about 1963 that Mission Messenger began to be influential internationally. Included in reports to be found in the paper for that year are some from Australia, Canada, Okinawa, England, The Netherlands, Chile, Scotland, Thailand, Denmark and Finland. It was great to receive letters and subscriptions from such far-away places, but this eventually proved our undoing. Nell was taking care of all the wrapping and bundling of the papers, as well as looking after the subscription list. Some people moved so frequently that it actually amounted to us sending the paper to them and paying them for reading it.

Eventually the paper was going to more than 8200 homes on every continent. We had to stop. Nell was actually working for twelve hours some days. After giving notice of intent for three years we reached the end of our row on December 1, 1975. Although we ceased publication then we still receive a great many subscriptions. Persons who have never heard of us before, will read an old paper and send in a dollar asking to be put on the list. We claim to be the only publishers who ever discontinued because they were too successful.

It was on January 31, 1963, that J. D. Thomas of Abilene Christian College published in *Gospel Advocate*, an article entitled "Brother Ketcherside's New Fallacy." It was full of such

manifest error that I wrote B. C. Goodpasture asking for space in which to reply. He would not grant it. So I wrote to Brother Thomas and made an offer for fair examination of my ideas at Abilene. I wrote as follows:

"Since I am sure that you believe in the right of sincere brethren to present their appeal in love, to be heard, can it be arranged that I come to Abilene for three sessions of two hours each, for public examination of my thesis? If so, I suggest that in the first two sessions I present objectively my position as to unity of the believers for one hour, and then submit to an hour of public questioning by a panel composed of three brethren, yourself being one and the other two being men of your selection. I further suggest that in the third session, after presentation of my views, I submit to questions (either oral or written) from the entire audience, yourself acting as chairman of that meeting.

"It would be understood that neither yourself nor Abilene Christian College concurred in or endorsed my views, but simply that as free men we met in interest of truth. I pledge upon my honor, that I will conduct myself with gentlemanly courtesy to all of the brethren, and if I cannot lessen areas of conflict I will not widen them."

At the time I had confidence that I might be invited to Abilene on the above fair and equitable terms, so that the perceptive students could hear and then reach their own conclusions. My hopes were dashed when, on February 9, I received the following curt note from Brother Thomas:

"Dear Brother Ketcherside: In reply to your recent letter inquiring about a public discussion of your present views, I wish to state that, for good and sufficient reasons, I would not be interested in trying to have such a discussion. Sincerely yours, *J. D. Thomas***."**

I kept on trying, thinking that conditions might have changed. Every year I published my offer to come to any college among us and subject my views to the scrutiny of faculty members. I then saw a letter written to the president of Abilene Christian, by Norman Parks, and after reading the reply to it I gave up on ever receiving a fair hearing before the student body. It was obvious that the administration and the doctors were fearful of what might happen. They could attack my views at will and refuse me the opportunity of being heard in an equitable exchange.

This was the year in which I was first asked to speak at the North American Christian Convention. It was held at the Long Beach Convention Center. I was appalled to see the sectarian attitude so rampant in one meeting. Fortunately, the brethren have "cleaned up their act" since that time, but the demonstration they put on in that meeting was one of the most childish and blatant exhibitions of party spirit I had ever seen exhibited. My speech was delivered on the evening of June 27, and it had an electrifying effect. It was the first time a non-instrument brother had spoken and it received the first standing ovation ever accorded up to that time.

Since that time, Leonard Wymore has tried to feature one or more men from the non-instrument segment. Bill Banowsky, Norvel Young, Marvin Phillips, Ira North, Leroy Garrett, and others have spoken and been well received. I substituted once for Joe Barnett from Lubbock, whose secretary telephoned the night before his appearance and said he was sick. The meeting is the largest and best attended of any within the restoration movement. I have addressed the saints three times and thoroughly enjoyed it. It is strictly a preaching convention. No business is transacted. No resolutions are drawn up. The brethren believe in the autonomy of the local church. It is a great big get-together of people from all over who meet and enjoy one another's company. Leonard Wymore is one of God's noblemen.

During the year I spoke at numerous colleges, among which were Manhattan Christian, Manhattan, Kansas; Nebraska Christian, Norfolk, Nebraska; Puget Sound College of the Bible, Seattle, Washington; Johnson Bible College, Kimberlin Heights, Tennessee; and Minnesota Bible College, then in Minneapolis, but since moved to Rochester. In every one of those I found students who were eager to hear the message of peace on earth to men of good will.

There were two opportunities afforded to really cross over lines. In Nebraska I was invited to Dana College, on March 22. It is a liberal arts school under supervision of the Augustana Lutheran Conference, and a great many of the students were Scandinavian by birth. It was interesting to me to see the ritual in chapel. It was much like that to which I was accustomed in my earlier days in the Missouri Synod. After speaking to the students publicly I went down to the lounge and conversed with them privately and in small groups for another hour. I found them turned off by the liturgy.

The other occasion was on October 27 when I went to Kendallville, Indiana, to deliver a Reformation Day address. It came three days before the anniversary of Martin Luther's nailing of the 95 theses against the church door in Wittenberg. We had a joint meeting of all the Protestant Churches and I spoke on "Heretics and Heroes." I made the point that a heretic is a hero ahead of his time. All a heretic has to do is to be dead a hundred years and he will become a hero. One generation hurls stones at a heretic, which the next generation picks up and makes a monument from them.

Everything that has been gained in religion has been gained by those accused of being heretics. Luther, Huss, Zwingli, Calvin and Wesley, were all branded as such by their contemporaries. It is often easier to label one a heretic than it is to deal with what he is saying. Luther faced an Establishment which was well entrenched. The Elector of Saxony said, "I am

not at all surprised that it has made so much noise; for he has committed two unpardonable crimes; he has attacked the pope's tiara, and the monks' bellies."

I pointed to the need of another reformation with Luther's words: "I will say what I mean, boldly and briefly; the Church needs reformation. And this cannot be the work either of a single man, as the pope, or of many men, as the cardinals and councils; but it must be that of the whole world, or rather it is a work that belongs to God alone. As for the time in which such a reformation should begin he alone knows who has created all time. The dike is broken, and it is no longer in our power to restrain the impetuous and overwhelming billows."

It was during this time that Martin M. Mitchum, who was an elder in the Christian Church at Rolla, Missouri, and a man with great insight, decided to take definite steps to do something tangible about the unity of believers. He invited Don DeWelt, Howard Short, and me to engage in public dialogue on fellowship. Don was from Ozark Bible College. Howard was editor of *The Christian*, now called *The Disciple*. This was before restructure had taken place among the Disciples of Christ, and we had a meaningful discussion. Each of us spoke fifteen minutes and then sat down together to field questions from the audience. All three of us came away with a greater feeling of respect for each other.

I have often wondered since what would have happened if such discussions could have continued among top-level men. Would it have made a difference? Was the sectarian spirit so engrained and crystallized that we would have to go on to the bitter end? Or do things have to work out of their own accord and in the good time of God, as Luther indicated? We talked about these and many other things as we drove back to Saint Louis that night.

But one of the outstanding gatherings was at Wynnewood

Chapel in Dallas, Texas. It was held June 30-July 7. Speakers and teachers were Darrell Bolin, Leroy Garrett, and myself. This launched a series of meetings which were held annually. Sometimes there were two meetings per year. They were notable for their openness and for their freedom of spirit. As time went on, brethren from every background were given an opportunity to speak. Brother Degroot and Ralph Graham from the Disciples of Christ, Jack Holt from the anti-cooperation wing, Ervin Waters from the one-cup brethren. We invited brethren from every segment and they came. One day Pat Hardeman came and asked a lot of insistent questions. He was with Florida College at the time. We were surprised a little later to learn that he had gone with the Universalist Church. Sometimes things warmed up quite a bit as brethren brought with them some of their clan. They came to listen to their man and as soon as he had finished they walked out.

J. D. Phillips joined with us in teaching and it was great to share with him. He was editor of "The Truth." His knowledge of restoration history was amazing and we were greatly blessed by the anecdotes which he told. Bill Thurman taught one year and gave fresh insights into the Word. There was nothing static about the meetings. They changed from year to year as the personnel of the congregation changed. There was much to learn in the exchange of ideas. Looking back on things I can see that these meetings were within the will of God. They were a part of our struggle for the meaningful life. The influence of Leroy, calm and unruffled, was a real part of the gatherings.

In December I finished a reprint of articles by Reuel Lemmons and my reply to the same. I said: "Better days are ahead for all of us. There are signs everywhere that attitudes are changing. Brethren are becoming more bold in their declarations against orthodoxy and legalism. Of course we anticipate further areas of personal attack and boycott, but this is a small price to pay for freedom in Christ Jesus. Be sure that we shall not allow ourselves to become embittered or cease to

love. Our hope of sharing with Jesus over there depends upon our exhibiting love to all of the brethren over here."

That year, the Hartford Forum featured talks by Russell Boatman on "The Basis of Authority"; Harold Key on "Fellowship and Endorsement"; Roy Key on "Legalism and Faith"; Grayson Ensign on "Is Unity Possible in Diversity?" and by Leroy Garrett on "The Vocabulary of the Holy Spirit." I spoke on "The Relationship of Immersion to Fellowship." A great time was had by all.

5. The Change Continues

Our Enduring Heritage

Contents

Henry David Thoreau wrote, "Only that traveling is good which reveals to me the value of things at home, and enables me to enjoy them better." It was in 1964 we built our new house, and moved into it shortly before Thanksgiving Day. It was five minutes from the air terminal and Nell could drop me off there, and come and get me on my return without ever going to the public parking lot. The house was designed to enable us to handle the paper and my books, and proved to be ideal for our need.

And we needed something to make travel more convenient. During the year, among many other places I spoke at Milligan College; at the Bond County Fellowship Meeting at Mulberry Grove, Illinois; at the alumni meeting at Lincoln Christian College; at the Southern Illinois Christian Convention; at Roanoke Bible College in Elizabeth City, North Carolina; at the Tri-State Fellowship in Weirton, W. Va.; at the Statewide Fellowship Meeting in Boise, Idaho; at the Statewide Rally at Little Rock, Arkansas; at Ozark Bible College, Joplin, Missouri; at the Arizona Christian Convention, at Phoenix; and at Oregon State Christian Convention, at Turner, Oregon. This was but a little of my travels during the year.

In the meeting at Milligan College, I first came in contact with Dr. Robert Burns, and liked him from the start. I had

corresponded with him many times but it was a great privilege to know him personally. At the time he was minister for the great Peachtree Christian Church in Atlanta and a genial gentleman.

Present with us also was Dr. James DeForest Murch, of Silver Springs, Maryland. He knew the history of the restoration movement like few others I have ever met. He had just edited a history of it called *Christians Only*. He had always been intensely interested in unity as evident in the Witty-Murch discussions. He was a co-founder of the National Association of Evangelicals, and editor of their journal *United Evangelical Action*. He was founder and president of the National Sunday School Association, the National Association of Religious Broadcasters, and the Evangelical Press Association. He was also managing editor of *Christianity Today*. He was author and composer of the song "I'll Put Jesus First In My Life." We began a great fellowship which lasted until his death, and the times he spent in our home meant much to me.

On March 4, 1964, Harvey Bream and I met in a 3½ hour public conference with Dr. Clyde Funkhouser, District Superintendent of the Methodist Church, at Fairfield, Illinois. The subject was "Current Views on Christian Unity." Harvey was editor of *The Restoration Herald* but has since become president of Cincinnati Bible College. The encounter was great and confirmed me in the belief that we needed to cross over lines for dialogue.

It was about this time I formulated a policy with reference to other journals. I was under attack from some of them in every issue. I was being called a heretic, a Judas Iscariot, a Benedict Arnold, a compromiser, and a liberal. It was not popular in those days to affirm that every child of God in the world was your brother. So I simply resolved to mention the various papers and urge my readers to send for a copy and read what was being said about me for themselves. It proved to be a good method of

dealing with the situation and I pursued it as long as I continued to publish. It was about this time someone sent me a little motto which read: "Love Your Enemies, It Drives Them Nuts."

During this year Leroy Garrett made a monthly out of his paper which had previously been edited as a quarterly. This gave him the opportunity to write articles which were geared more closely to the times. The result was a great increase in the number of subscriptions. The paper has been a monthly ever since and has accomplished profound good. Leroy has never been free from attack, much of it unprincipled, but his patience and tolerance have turned this to great growth. By this means much has been accomplished to the glory of our Lord.

The following year, 1965, brought three things to pass which were of note in my life. First, I was invited to speak at the World Convention of Churches of Christ, in San Juan, Puerto Rico. The World Convention was begun by Jesse M. Bader to provide a chance for the various restoration groups to meet together and listen to one another. The first one was held in Washington, D.C., in October, 1930. There were more than 9,000 present.

I was the first participant from the non-instrument group who had ever been present. When I arrived in San Juan, there were 6000 people present from 32 countries. The evening meetings were held at Herman Bithorn Stadium on the outskirts of town. Buses were used to transport people to the place and back to the hotels. The address of welcome was made by Florentino Santana, who was president. I was on the speaker's stand with Ray Blampied, president of the college at Dunedin in New Zealand, who was to be the first speaker. Brother Blampied's speech was characteristic of those who take a liberal theological approach to the sacred scriptures. It was apparent that many of the common folk did not like it very much.

Mine was entitled "Our Enduring Heritage" and my

closing paragraph said, "Our enduring heritage! My entertainment in infancy, my instruction in youth, my inspiration in manhood, my invigoration in approaching age, my illumination on the coming journey through the valley of shadows! Oh, may I never forget it, but love it, revere it, and through it be faithful unto Him whose word it is. And amidst the clamor of disputed claims, the shouts of sharply separated scientific scholars, and the propositions of antagonistic professors and pundits, may I never forget that it is better to know the Rock of Ages than to know the age of the rocks."

I was hardly prepared for what transpired. People from the Congo, from South America, and from Australia, pressed around me to shake my hand. They were thrilled to hear someone defend the Word as inspired of God and revealed from heaven. After my speech I was sought out by various ones who wanted to discuss the bearing of my remarks upon their national life and conduct. I began correspondence with some of them, and we continued to write to each other for years. It was as if God had arranged everything to His glory.

The next speaker after I finished was George R. Davis of National City Christian Church in Washington, D.C. He spent his entire time defending the president, Lyndon Johnson, who was a member of his congregation. The contrast in speeches was so great that a lot of brethren from other parts of the world were turned off. One of them said to me, "We came thousands of miles to hear about the Savior, and it is a new wrinkle to learn that his last name is Johnson."

The second thing which meant a lot to me was the study in depth conducted at Highland Church in Louisville, August 2-6. It was strangely successful, bringing together brethren from 12 states, 4 continents, and 6 segments of the restoration movement. Brethren affiliated with congregations which held the premillennial view were always intensely interested in souls. They had gone to the remotest parts of the earth with the

message of life and had labored under great difficulties to tell the story of the cross. It was a blessing to have some of them in our audience.

The third thing which affected me was the cessation of the *American Christian Review***, after 110 years. This truly marked the end of an era. It did not make the impact it would have made if it had stopped a few years before. For a long time it had been simply picking up and reprinting older articles and it was no longer geared to the times. It had outlived its usefulness and was ready to die. But it brought a touch of nostalgia to me. It was the first religious paper I had ever seen. When I was a mere lad it came to our home. I used to lie flat of my stomach on the floor and read every word of it.**

Brother Daniel Sommer was born of German immigrant parents in 1850. After a boyhood of poverty and hardship, he enrolled in Bethany College when he was nineteen years of age. On January 28, 1873 he married Katherine Way, daughter of Francis Way, an elderly Quaker. In 1886 he purchased the *American Christian Review* **which had been started and printed by Benjamin Franklin, until his death near Anderson, Indiana, in the autumn of 1878. Brother Sommer changed its name to** *Octographic Review***, in honor of the eight writers of the new covenant scriptures. A great many of his humbler readers did not understand the meaning of the word "Octographic" so by the time I arrived on the scene it was changed again to** *Apostolic Review***. Eventually, it was returned to its original title.**

It was W. T. Moore who said, "The restoration movement does not have bishops— it has editors." For years our fate as a people was wrapped up with the *Apostolic Review***. Indianapolis was regarded as our headquarters, although anyone of us would have been quick to affirm that we had no earthly headquarters, but heaven was our home. Brother Sommer was a commanding figure. What he said was accepted as "law and gospel." When he read the Sand Creek Address and Declaration, and issued the**

ultimatum that those who persisted in the unscriptural clergy system, and in worldly ways of raising money for the support of the gospel, would no longer be regarded as brethren— that did it!

The fate of the Sommer family was our fate. When Sister Sommer became editor she debarred Daniel from writing and would not publish his material. Upon her death the editorship went to Chester and Bessie. D. Austen, who thought he should have been chosen, broke with them and started his own paper. It now became fashionable to speak with disrespect of the *Review* and with pride of the *Macedonian Call*. But editors have "feet of clay" and it was not long until D. Austen proved to be untrustworthy, as we saw it.

I am glad to be delivered from the unholy mess we created by our strife. But I want to see others also made free— free to love, to receive and to welcome all who are in Christ Jesus. Better times could come immediately if all of the papers among us would begin to urge upon us community instead of conformity. We will never see everything alike. If we did it would be but a short time until we differed about something else. What gain will come from calling for division where God has commanded peace?

Certainly, it would require an about-face. But what have we gained by pursuing the direction we have been going? Have we united the Christians in all of the sects? Have we brought peace to a body troubled with fighting? Is the heartache and bitterness, the hostility and hatred, to be our heritage to the bitter end? Will we continue to strike down every man who pleads with us to turn away the sword from shedding the blood of a brother?

Do not most of our divisions represent our faith in opinions rather than in Jesus? Do they not exemplify our trust in our own infallibility? Do not the words of Oliver Cromwell apply to us

today, "I beseech you, brethren, in the name of God, to consider that you may be mistaken." Are not there thousands upon earth who love Him as sincerely as we do, who revere His word and seek to follow in His path? What do we gain by giving them a shove instead of a helping hand? Shall we continue to shake our fist, rather than to wave our hand at a passing pilgrim?

Editors have gained too much power among us. They dominate our thinking. They determine our stand upon issues. They domineer in the realm of faith. And they make us pay for it. Let *us* choose wisely whom we shall follow.

5. The Change Continues

Reviewing Our Heritage

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The year of 1966 was destined to be one of violence at home and abroad. We were still entangled in war in Vietnam which was taking such a toll in lives and finance. And right in the middle of the year police in Chicago discovered the bodies of eight student nurses brutally murdered in the townhouse they shared. Fear gripped the hearts of those within the "Windy City" until police apprehended Richard Speck, an ex-convict, and charged him with the killings. Two weeks later, Charles J. Whitman, an architectural student at the University of Texas, climbed into a tower and killed 15 persons and wounded 31 others before he was himself killed.

On March 16, astronauts Neil A. Armstrong and David R. Scott made the first of five successful two-man Gemini spacecraft dockings, linking up with an Agena Target vehicle. On June 7, James Meredith, whose enrollment at the University of Mississippi in 1962 touched off massive riots, was shot from ambush on the second day of a projected hike of 260 miles from Memphis, Tennessee, to Jackson, Mississippi, to encourage Negroes to vote. Once again we demonstrated how great our technological skills were for handling acute problems of space, and how far behind we were in handling the agonizing problems of human behavior on earth.

The year was noteworthy in the restoration movement

circles of which we were a part also. March 4 marked exactly a hundred years from the death of Alexander Campbell. I went back and read once again the touching story of his dying as written by Dr. Robert Richardson, who preached the funeral discourse in God's Acre, at Bethany, before hundreds from all walks of life who came to honor the memory of this great man.

On September 1, the 150th anniversary of his "Sermon on the Law" was celebrated. It was this noble defense of the Good News from heaven given before the Redstone Baptist Association in 1816, which aroused so much hostility and created such animosity toward Campbell. He was ahead of his time. Today his message would hardly create a ripple on the surface of the muddled theological waters, but when delivered it cut right to the heart of things. It seems peculiar that the creeds of men are no longer the great issue among believers in Christ.

We had a gathering at Bethany during the year. It featured men and women from all of the major divisions of the movement. All of us stayed in the dormitory which gave us an opportunity to talk together between sessions. We also ate in the cafeteria and shared insights as we ate. Our discussions were held in Richardson Memorial Lecture Hall, and were generally very gracious. Brother Cawyer, an elder from Abilene, Texas, and a man I had known since childhood, tried to start an argument over music and kindred matters but served only to let off some of his own steam. No one was there to debate. During the sessions I heard Dr. Perry Epler Gresham deliver one of the finest speeches about Campbell that I have ever heard. He was an orator of the old school, and a real patron of a lost art.

On Sunday we held our meeting in the old brick meetinghouse which has been preserved, although only used upon occasions like this. We sat in the straight-backed seats and sang only hymns that dated back more than a century. We had no instrument. A sister had prepared a loaf as it used to be done, and we used the two silver chalices from which to drink the fruit

of the vine. They had been used by the congregation in its earlier days, and were brought from the Campbell museum for the occasion. It was easy to envision the saints of old gathering in their simplicity and humility, with the freed slaves sitting on the back rows.

It was the same house in which the venerable Thomas Campbell had given his farewell address on June 1, 1851, at the age of 88 years. With his hearing greatly impaired and totally blind, he had to be transported to the place on a horse-drawn sled, prepared for the occasion. His text was Matthew 22:37-40. I was chosen together with Seth Wilson of Ozark Bible College to do the preaching. I was pleased to address such a select group upon the Lord's table as a symbol of our unity. We parted at the door after having demonstrated the power of the Good News to unite the hearts of those who truly love Him.

During the year it was my privilege to address the Seventh Consultation on Internal Unity of the Christian Churches held at Enid, Oklahoma. Men from the Independent Christian Churches and Disciples of Christ periodically met to discuss their division and determine what grounds there might be for resumption of a working relationship. I was invited as a kind of "neutral" to serve as a Biblical lecturer at each session. It was there I first presented the thinking which later found its way into print as "The Death of the Custodian— the case of the missing tutor."

I postulated that our relationship with heaven was covenental, and that it was by grace and not by law. We must choose between love of law or the law of love, and the choice must be individual. It was in this series I first coined a number of phrases which I have since employed, such as "legalism has made us good lawyers, but God designed us to be great lovers." The series was well-received but it became apparent that the brethren were far apart theologically. But it served to convince me of one great thing which has proven to be invaluable to me.

Unity will never become a kind of organizational get-together. In the final analysis it is personal.

On June 15, I brought out the first edition of the book *Voices of Concern*, edited by Robert Meyers, at the time a minister for the Riverside Church of Christ, and a professor of English at Friends University, in Wichita. Bob was eminently qualified for the work of bringing out such a volume. He had been chewed up by the brotherhood "meat grinder" and thrown to the lions at Harding, much to the discomfiture of the lions. He graduated *summa cum laude* from Abilene Christian College, received an M.A. from the University of Oklahoma, and a Ph.D. from Washington University. He took special courses at Oxford University and at Salisbury, in England.

The book featured one chapter each from seventeen outstanding men and women who were or had been affiliated with the Church of Christ. It was written in compassion and with a tinge of sorrow that it had to be produced by these people at all. In a well-phrased preface the editor wrote, "Their hope was that this book would so alter conditions that no other volume of this kind would ever need to be written." Almost from its inception it came under attack and was subjected to bitter criticism. It could not be ignored. The writers were not ignorant, but were among the most brilliant thinkers produced within the Churches of Christ in this generation.

Not everything written about it was bad. It was reviewed in numerous periodicals, many of them outside the Church of Christ. Their favorable reports caused it to be widely read. It represented a complete reversal of policy and a new approach to journalism among Churches of Christ. We were attacked because we had disclosed sad and sordid things which had always been swept under the "brotherhood rug." For years the references to it in "Church of Christ journals" were all of vinegar mixed with gall. But "the cat was out of the sack" and there was no way now to capture the feline quietly. It is

interesting that, after the book went out of print, we still received many calls for it. Even now, after fourteen years, people write us wanting to know where they can obtain a copy, and offering premium prices for it.

Meanwhile I was busy traveling. I conducted a Forum on Fellowship at Lancaster, California; and a Conference on Evangelism at San Jose Bible College. I spoke at the State Christian Convention at Clovis, New Mexico; at the Mid-State Christian Men's Preaching Rally, at Mt. Zion, Ill.; at the Christian Student Fellowship, at Lexington, Kentucky; at the Christian Evangelistic Society Convention, at Pittsburgh, Penn.; at the Commencement and Preachers' Institute at Alberta Christian College, in Canada; at Kingdom Builders' Fellowship at Sumner, Illinois; at the School of Ministry, Milligan College, Tennessee; at the Blue Ridge Clinic, Hillsvale, Virginia; at Mountain States Christian Men's Retreat, Bluefield, West Virginia; and at the College-Career conference in Southern California.

These were but a few of the places to which I went during the year. I was also editing the paper, bringing out books, and doing a full service effort in Saint Louis. Everywhere I went I took the message that all of us could be one in Christ, and none of us give up any truth he had ever held. I defined fellowship as the sharing of a common life— eternal life. Many were not ready for it. Brethren were afraid of it. They had lived so long behind the walls of their self-imposed exiles that they felt protected and shaded. The elders of the Chestnut Drive Church of Christ in Doraville, Georgia issued a "white paper" in opposition to the things "Mr. Ketcherside" said in the fellowship in Atlanta. I was not recognized as a brother by these unfortunate persons. I mentioned it without rancor in *Mission Messenger* and urged everyone to write for a copy and read carefully the negative opinions it expressed. It was obvious that in Church of Christ circles fellowship was conditioned upon what you were against, rather than who you were for.

I was not deterred by the attacks upon me, either made clandestinely or openly. When I first sat down several years before and worked out the strategy for my attack upon the sectarian spirit, I recognized that it would be unsuccessful if I allowed myself to become ruffled or lost my ability to show love for those who counted themselves to be my enemies. I resolved to remain calm and cool under fire. Regardless of the misrepresentations of my position I must never stoop to the employment of such methods. It has paid off to be fair, just and equitable.

The Hartford (Illinois) Forum, held in December of 1966, was on the theme "The Holy Spirit in Our Lives Today." It brought together men from the Disciples of Christ, Christian Churches, and three different segments of the Church of Christ brotherhood. Some were charismatic while others were opposed to it. There was not one untoward moment. We came together as brethren and left with the feeling heightened above what it was when we came.

When Roy Key, of Ames, Iowa delivered his gracious message on "The Holy Spirit and Our Prayer Life" he touched a responsive chord in every heart. Bro. Key grew up in the Churches of Christ. All of his family were still members of it. But he was so abused and mistreated by brethren that he was literally driven out. During his address he told the touching story of Roland Hayes, the talented black singer who sang before the crowned heads of Europe, but who later returned to the old plantation where his mother had been a slave. There was hardly a dry eye in the house as Roy painted the picture of his confrontation with the old master and mistress and the forgiveness he felt in his heart. It was a great meeting, a good one, and it made all of us regret when it was over and we had to return home to the division that existed.

6. God's Peace in Turbulent Times

From Lubbock to Kimberlin Heights

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It would serve no good purpose to pass by the year 1966, without detailing one special event which had great significance. It was the fiftieth anniversary of the First Christian Church in Lubbock, Texas, and I was invited by the genial Dr. Dudley Strain, to speak at the banquet honoring the event. Upon my arrival in Lubbock I found that Broadway Church of Christ was but a short distance down the street and that Batsell Barrett Baxter was in a meeting there, with special noonday services. I resolved to attend.

We went early and I met Bill Banowsky, who was minister, and also Jim Bevis, who was on the staff. I was amazed to see about 450 present at midday. After Bro. Baxter had finished, Bro. Banowsky arose and said he could not introduce all of the many visitors who were present, but there was one who was giving such a fresh and wholesome outlook to the churches, that he wanted all to come and meet him, for the day was coming when men would say, "We had a prophet among us and knew it not." He then asked me to stand and be identified. He also announced that he had called Dr. Strain and had reserved a table for Church of Christ folk, and he intended to hear me at the Christian Church that evening.

During the afternoon I met with more than a dozen preachers of the Christian Church— Disciples of Christ,

discussing what course would be pursued by those who loved the Lord in our day. I was appalled to see how the so-called social gospel had eroded their minds and how little of the sacred scripture they really knew. After the banquet I learned that Dr. Kline Nall, head of the English Department at Texas State University, had arranged for a wide open meeting on the subject of fellowship. It was attended by a number of Disciples of Christ ministers, together with representatives of seven different Churches of Christ. There were about ninety present. I spoke about ten minutes and then opened it for questions. To give everyone a fair opportunity for questioning, I limited the number of questions to three from one person each round.

Brother Banowsky was present and listened carefully but asked no questions. Brother Baxter quietly asked a few during the course of the evening. But Brother Thomas B. Warren set out to trap me and throw the thing into confusion. On his last question he asked a number of them, each one with a design in mind. It was easy to detect his purpose and I "headed him off at the pass." It was that evening, during the three hours "among the doctors" that I became convinced that the position I held on fellowship was unassailable and invincible, and that all the objectors could do was to quibble and cavil. I also left feeling that some of those present were in actual sympathy with my position but could not say so openly. It was a refreshing experience and made me more glad than ever that I was free in Christ.

On February 23, 24 I went to Columbia, Missouri, seat of our state university, to speak three times at a fellowship forum at Westside Christian Church, and to address those who attended the banquet for the college-university class, which was under the sponsorship of Dr. James Ferneau. It was while I was there that I became convinced that the battle for the minds of men would be fought out on the university level. It became obvious that our real enemy was humanism and secularism. I returned home to begin a study of these, and to gird myself for

the future combat. It was suddenly borne home to me that we are not in the arena with ignorant anti-intellectuals any more, but with sophisticated rebels in an "age of doubt" and some of these are razor sharp.

On March 6, I began with Riverside congregation in Wichita. It was only by God's providence that I should be there. It had been the congregation where G. K. Wallace, had held forth for so long. Sister Wallace, the wife from whom he divorced, was still there. When I debated with Brother Wallace, in Arkansas, a number of years before, no one would have dared to predict that I would preach there. The people were great Christians, above the average intellectually. They were nervous and upset by the continuous attacks made upon them by other Churches of Christ in the area. They were under a constant barrage.

Bro. Robert Meyers was preaching for them, and I was with him and his great family a lot. Bob was not a traditional Church of Christ preacher, nor a preacher of Church of Christ traditions. This disturbed a few in the congregation, who not only wanted to hear the same things said, but in the same words they were accustomed to hear. I received Bob because of his deep faith in Christ, and admired his superb scholarship, although I was probably a trial to him by my lack of it. I returned for another meeting later and I suspect some good was done. Eventually Bob changed to teaching at Wichita State from Friends University, and became preaching minister at the Congregational Church in the city. I have often longed to see him again.

I would not want to be critical, nor "hurl the cynic's ban," but it seems to me that we are unable to make room under the umbrella of God's love for those who challenge us to think beyond ourselves. We are uncomfortable with men who want to scale the peaks, and dwell among the clouds. Our God is a "God of the valleys" and we prefer to dwell there "in peace and quiet"

like the inhabitants of Laish who "had no dealings with other people." The demand for parrots has produced a lot of "chickens" among us. It is only when we learn to make allowance for one another in love that we will have arrived.

If you recall, 1967 was in the thick of the counter rebellion which originated primarily at Berkeley, but could have burst out anywhere. The Haight-Ashbury district in San Francisco was composed of the flotsam and jetsam of our culture which was blown up by the westerly winds. The "flower children" were doing their thing. Nudity was being flaunted. The sex-revolution was at its height. Drug abuse was fast becoming a way of life. Young people were blowing their minds as frequently as they once blew their noses. It was at this very time that Gene Rogers and Loran Biggs, ministers, brought me to Gardena, California, to spend the entire Easter break working with the young people of the area.

The arrangements were ideal. Buses brought 152 high school kids in every morning. They were alone with me for two hours. Then the church furnished them luncheon. Closed circuit television allowed the parents to see me and hear my answers to the questions, but not see the children. Their questions were terrific. They covered the whole range from the nature of religion to sexuality. I was training them to be not only aggressively pure but to wage war against the whole mixed-up social order. I wanted them to become "commandos for Christ." Those who were in high school were not there merely to study algebra and science. They were dropped behind the lines to wage a warfare. They were secret agents for the greatest kingdom ever founded. Their task was not to run from evil but to infiltrate the ranks of those who were engaged in it and take them captives for Christ. It seemed to work. In the afternoon I met with 60 college people, and at night spoke to an average of 330 adults. It seemed to me that we were privileged to give Satan a real blow and drive back the forces of darkness.

March 30 found me at the Southern Christian Convention in Kingsport, Tennessee. Present also to speak was George Gurganus, at the time with the Harding Graduate School in Memphis. He was there because of his great knowledge of missions. It gave me a chance to observe how men from the non-instrument ranks reacted around other brethren. They were not free and comfortable. I found that they simply spoke and retired from the scene. They did what they came to do and that was it. Most of them, at the outset of their speeches, disavowed the idea that their speeches implied fellowship. It was evident they were "covering their tracks" if they were questioned by some of the more radical brethren back home. There was no warm fraternization, except in the case of Bill Banowsky and Norvel Young, who seemed to appreciate being invited by the North American Christian Convention and generally appeared to have a good time. Bill Banowsky especially treated the folk like brethren.

April 10-14 I conducted a five night study on the Holy Spirit at Fort Wayne, Indiana. My good friend, Bill Lower, was minister. He has since removed to Denver, Colorado where he has done a remarkable job. The Charismatic movement was just beginning to gain momentum. Demos Shakarian and Dennis Bennett were still unfamiliar names to a lot of folk in the restoration movement. I chose to make my teaching positive, rather than negative, and to tell what the Holy Spirit does for us, rather than what He does not do for anyone.

The lessons were well received, and I kept polishing them up for a presentation elsewhere. Eventually they became the basis for two of my books *One Great Chapter* **and** *Heaven Help Us***. The first constituted a verse-by-verse study of Romans, chapter 8, in which Paul seems to rise to new heights in telling of God's great provision in Christ. I used a great number of the questions I received in my talks on the subject as groundwork for the material in the books, which could well have been designated a kind of "brotherhood project." I was a little**

astounded to find out how little most of the brethren knew about "Our Little Helper."

It was during this year I spoke at the homecoming at Johnson Bible College, where anything can happen, and something usually does. It was a rare privilege for me to be on Kimberlin Heights, where Ashley S. Johnson, through sheer drive made his dream take reality. It was here he began The School of Evangelists in 1893. Always known as "the father of the poor young preacher" he threw the doors of his school open to any young man of purpose in the mountains who was willing "to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." Everyone was expected to work in those days, on the farm, in the dairy, or in the kitchen. Students arose at 4:30 a.m., and found the president already up and praying.

Of course things have changed in our day, but there still hangs over the lovely campus which has displaced the rude one of an earlier day, enough of the spirit of its founder to sanctify many of the students and to give them some of the courage of him who, like Napoleon, refused to recognize that there was such a word as "impossible." It was a really great thing to be there where so many of his books had been written. I had read all of them.

6. God's Peace in Turbulent Times

"One Faith, 10,000 Opinions"

Contents

There were two events which I attended in 1966 which were outstanding because of their nostalgic value. The first one sought to recapture for our day the spirit of Cane Ridge where it all began. It was the Second Annual Brush Arbor Meeting, near Fairfield, North Carolina, held on June 24. When I arrived the day before I found a number of men presiding over the roasting pits on which lay four hogs and and a whole beef. The men were under the direction of a chef who told them when to replenish the fire under the spits and grills. They worked all night long preparing for the next day.

People came early to allow time for visiting. They parked in a huge field, directed by several men into the long rows of vehicles. Everything was very systematic and orderly. By the time for the morning meeting there were about three thousand present. The license plates bore the names of a number of states. The pulpit was erected out in the open and had a canopy of brush over it. It was a haunting reminder of the old days. I recalled the times I had spoken in a brush arbor in the Missouri Ozarks in my younger days. After I had spoken in the morning meeting, the people lined up in six rows to be served with meat and slaw. The food was great and the fellowship was wonderful. Nothing was lacking.

The other event was The Cumberland Christian Camp

Meeting, held out in a state park near Corbin, Kentucky. The town itself was renowned as the home of Colonel Sanders, of Kentucky Fried Chicken fame. One could see the restaurant where he had gone bankrupt, with nothing left but a recipe and a vision. These he had parlayed into a fortune. The colonel was immersed while still a boy and had been a member of several Christian Churches.

The camp meeting was held under a huge tent. A number of brethren pitched tents around it and stayed for the entire thing, including the chicken barbecue prepared by men of the Corbin area the last evening. It was my privilege to stay with Fred Waggoner, whom I had known in Logan, Ohio, and several other places. Like me, he was pretty much of a "homespun" preacher who operated a grocery store at Grayson where we first became acquainted. He would tackle anything, whether qualified or not, and generally was successful. We had a great time together and the meetings were tremendous.

From the pulpit one could look out to where the blue haze dropped down on distant hills. The cool crisp mountain air in the morning was invigorating. It was easy to imagine the wagon trains of yesteryear snaking through the Cumberland Gap. Kentucky was destined to play a prominent part in the restoration ideal. It was at Cane Ridge that it began, and at Lexington that the forces of Stone and Campbell met together and became one. It was at the outset of the meeting which consummated this union that John Smith said, "While there is but one faith, there may be ten thousand opinions; and hence, if Christians are ever to agree, they must be one in faith, and not in opinion."

I went to Macrorie, Saskatchewan, for the camp meeting in which I taught. There were 150 enrolled. This gathering was sponsored by the congregation at Outlook, a little group of hardy souls, numbering about 25 in those days. The camp was located in a shady valley which cut like a gash through the wheat

fields of the almost boundless prairie. The people who attended pitched their tents, or pulled their campers into little cleared spots in the underbrush. I slept in the back of a converted schoolbus. It was a tremendous time of fellowship and Bible teaching. The camp has contributed much to the alleviation of suspicion and distrust. Although the congregation does not use instrumental music it has consistently refused to make a test of it and has used preachers who favor it. The result is that sharing has been encouraged and needs have been met in a very real way. Much of this is directly attributable to the Banting and Tweedie families who have worked together amicably for years, and whose good judgment and commonsense have become noteworthy.

On September 1, 2, I was the speaker at Pearson's Mill Christian Assembly near Converse, Indiana. The camp director is Rod Cameron, a man of many talents, and a great friend of mine. A descendant of the Scottish clan Cameron, Rod was fortunate enough to marry Beverly who has stood by him through thick and thin. That has taken some doing because it was often thicker than it was thin. Early on he became a ventriloquist, and he and his dummy are well known. He went to Africa in 1958, shortly after the erection of the gigantic Kariba Dam on the Zambezi River in Rhodesia. They cut a track of almost eleven miles through the heavy brush, and for several months slept under the bed of their Chevrolet Power Wagon. Their first kitchen was a tarpaulin stretched over a rope, their first storage room was a shelter made with reeds. Their water supply was eight miles away.

Rod nearly drove the "witch doctors" up a tree with his ventriloquism. They did not know what to make of Gabby. Few people really do. There were few things the witch doctors could do that Rod could not do better. But I had to leave to begin preparation for the delivery of the speeches in the Roy B. Shaw Memorial Lectureship, held annually at San Jose Bible College. The school has a great history of promoting unity. It was while

Bill Jessup, that wonderful man of God, was president of the college, that Ernest Beam began to make overtures of oneness. Brother Jessup brought him into the Bay Area for a joint meeting of brethren. It was shot down by anti-instrumental brethren who attended for that purpose. It ended in a shouting match which was disorderly. Challenges were waved about for debates. But times have changed, and there were brethren present from all segments of the church to hear me. Al Tiffin, the president, had contributed well to the ongoing dreams of his predecessors.

It was about this time that the magazine *Mission* began. The first edition carried articles by Abraham J. Malherbe, Roy Bowen Ward, Thomas H. Olbricht, Donald McGaughey, Wesley C. Reagan, and Juan A. Monroy. The journal began as a kind of sophisticated medium to relate to the modern world in which we live. It proposed to give good thinkers a chance to be heard in a way they could not in the ordinary publications. From the first it had to be subsidized by its trustees. It faced opposition, both overt and covert, because it did not hesitate to milk sacred cows, which previously had been used only for worship. It is a matter of deep shame that Abilene Christian College exercised censorship over those on its staff who wrote for it, and brought pressure upon them to quit.

It was during 1966 that Norman Waters, a Tutor at Fitzwilliam College, at the University of Cambridge, in England, passed away. He was the first president of the Alexander Campbell Society. This was a coalition of persons in various colleges and universities in Great Britain who had banded themselves together to preserve the heritage and influence of the reformer. He was succeeded by Peter D. Archer, of Glasgow, and Philip Brooks became the secretary of the society.

The last named and I began a correspondence which lasted over a period of several years. From him I obtained a list of the members and their addresses. It was interesting to note that they

came from every college and university in the entire United Kingdom. I became an associate member and enjoyed the exchanges with some of the most brilliant young minds I have ever known.

Some fine things happened to people whom I knew and loved during 1967, things which caused me to rejoice in their behalf. Bert Ellis wrote from Pusan, Korea, about discovery of a grassroots movement of concerned Christians who could see the folly of denominationalism. Mont Smith reported from Kiramu, Ethiopia, that 87 native people attended meetings in his livingroom in one week. Dr. Robert Walker and his wife Phyllis were being used of God at Hippo Valley Christian Hospital, in Rhodesia. William Hendren, Belfast, North Ireland, with whom I had made my home, was elected a Fellow of the Royal Microscopic Society. John L. Morrison received his Ph.D. from Stanford. The subject of his thesis was "Alexander Campbell and Moral Education."

Henry Boren, of the History Department at the University of South Carolina received a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, which would enable him to live in Rome for a year and work on a numismatic project. Thomas Langford accepted a fellowship for a year of work at the United States Office of Education, in Washington, D.C. Boyd L. Lammiman was selected as the new president of Alberta Christian College in Calgary. He is still there. A. V. Mansur brought out a new book under the title "Let My People Go." Gordon Souder, who was living at Burnaby, British Columbia, finished a second semester of Russian language study at Simon Fraser University and was laboring with Russian-speaking Christians in the area.

Bob Duncan was granted a sabbatical leave from his position at Illinois State University to do research in California. Barry Willbanks was awarded an Honor Scholarship at Harvard Theological Seminary for topflight scholastic work.

The Dallas Times Herald featured a three-column spread on the work of Leroy Garrett in the field of Christian unity. Brother Garrett expressed himself as being extremely optimistic for the future. Mike Wood was given a scholarship for research at Emory University. All of this seems so very long ago. I cite these instances to show how active God is in human affairs. He is continually bestowing gifts, blessing all of us, calling all of us to greater heights of service. It is no wonder that I bow in humblest adoration and daily give thanks for His marvelous grace.

Of course, during the year He called a lot of brethren to be with Him. He allowed them to graduate ahead of the regular class, and receive their diplomas before the rest of us were called. Among these were James Pierce, a wonderful brother in Des Moines, Iowa; Bonds Stocks, former administrative assistant to Rep. John Rankin, of Mississippi; Cleo Mabery, Flat River, Missouri, whom I immersed when both of us were fifteen years of age; Vearla Foltz, Chillicothe, Missouri, a retired rural mail carrier, whose home had often been mine; James A. Allen, Nashville, Tennessee, long time editor of the *Apostolic Times*. Bro. Allen was set against the rise of the clergy system, which he could see invading the churches. He was handicapped in his opposition by location and circumstances. Paul Mackey, Burbank, California, an excellent journalist, finally succumbed to cancer after a long battle. He was only 33 years of age.

As I look in retrospect upon the death of these and others whom I knew I wonder what changes would have occurred if they had lived. What kind of an impact would they have made upon the world? Then I am encouraged to press on without delay, knowing that I shall join them on the other side. It is a wonderful thought that those whom we knew over here we shall see over there where all conflicts have ceased and all strife is past.

6. God's Peace in Turbulent Times

Recovery of Something Old

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It is amazing how the history of the "kingdom of God" is interwoven with and affected by the things which transpire in the kingdoms of men. Although we have no continuing city here, we have to live in a lot of them which are not going to continue, and in which rot and decay have already set in. We may be strangers and pilgrims, but we are also sojourners in a land that is not ours. Whatever happens politically, economically, or socially affects us all. Candidates for glory die in times of epidemics and plagues as do the rankest unbelievers. All of us alike live in an atmosphere that has been colored by guilt and sin.

In March of 1968 President Johnson shook the nation by announcing that he could not enter the race for another term. That "waved the flag" which made it possible for everyone to get into the race. It was won by Richard Nixon who received 43.4 percent of the popular vote to 42.7 by Hubert Humphrey. A surprising 13.5 percent went to George Wallace. The stage was thus set for the traumatic and as yet unexplained condition which later transpired and took the name of Watergate.

On April 4, Martin Luther King was shot to death on the balcony of a motel in Memphis, where he had gone to assist in a strike by black sanitation workers. On June 7 James Earl Ray was arrested in London and charged with the wanton murder.

Frustration, disappointment, and depression gripped the black community and expressed itself in looting and violence. Then, as if a frightful and malign influence was manipulating the nation, Robert Kennedy was shot on June 6 in Los Angeles. It cast a pall over a peaceful populace who had rejected forceful overthrow of the existing order as a rational alternative to the ballot box.

During the year, death claimed one of the greatest examples of triumph over handicaps in our nation. At the age of 87, in Westport, Connecticut, Helen Keller gave up the struggle to maintain a life which had been marked by privation and suffering. At the age of nineteen months she became blind, deaf and mute. Under the careful and gentle tutelage of Anne Sullivan Macy she quickly learned to read and in 1900 she was able to enter Radcliffe College. She graduated with honors in 1904. Later she lectured throughout the world, visiting wounded veterans and giving them hope and infusing them with courage.

In spite of the frightful murders, the looting, and the rapine which ripped our nation apart, the year ended on a note of real faith. Nell and I were in the home of Jerry, our son, and with his family on Christmas Eve when it happened. Three astronauts aboard Apollo 8 had orbited the moon several times. They were the first human beings to view the far side of the moon. Suddenly one of them began to read from the sacred scriptures. Man's voice came from the greatest distance it had ever come with the age-old truth. It seemed that everything was all right again.

It was about this time that I had matured to the place where I had learned to trust in God fully and completely. I began to realize that He knew the end from the beginning, and could call the things that be not as though they were. He holds the whole world in His hand. This made two changes in my life. First of all, I prayed before arriving at a place that God would take the whole thing under His providence and bring together those who needed me most and let me relate to them for the

mutual upbuilding of both of us. Since that time I have never been uptight about crowds. I have spoken to those who were present with equal fervor, whether there were six or six thousand, and have praised His name for what He did.

Second, I began to pray that He would open up for me great doors and effectual, although the adversaries were many. I realize that He never had a less qualified person through whom to work. The only thing I had going for me was an intense desire to see His will accomplished, and a fervent love for people. My educational attainments were as nothing and I cast what little I did have to the dogs. I had no degrees and had never been to college. But I resolved to go wherever the opportunity was afforded and to do my best. That prayer opened up for me chances which were tremendous and for which I am humbly grateful and profoundly thankful.

On February 13 I went to Milligan College to deliver an address at the Welshimer Memorial Lectureship. Brother P. H. Welshimer was in Canton, Ohio when a great revival was held by Billy Sunday. He followed up on those who made a profession, baptizing hundreds into Christ. He began the largest adult Bible Class in the nation at the time. A Welshimer Room is contained in the beautiful library which bears his name at Milligan, and every year a lectureship is held in his honor. My theme was "The Cross and the Growth of the Church."

That night I was scheduled to speak at Erwin, Tennessee, as one of five speakers brought in by a joint rally of Protestant Churches, each year, to demonstrate that, in spite of their differences, Jesus Christ is Lord. It afforded an opportunity for those with varied doctrinal biases to meet others in the community. That afternoon I was interviewed over radio. I then spoke to more than 700 persons gathered in the building of the First Baptist Church, following which I held a dialogue session with the Protestant clergy of the area. I came away convinced that these men were greatly responsible for the perpetuation of

feuds and divisions.

The next morning I spoke to more than a thousand students in the local high school. At noon I broadcast a sermon from the pulpit of the First Christian Church. As I prepared to fly out of the area that afternoon, I looked back upon my stay of one and a half days, and thought of the bases I had touched. It was apparent that God was opening doors, for by no stretch of the imagination could I conceive of myself arranging all of these things. But it was merely beginning.

A little more than two weeks later, on March 3-7 found me at Langley Air Force Base for a Religious Emphasis Week. It was arranged by George C. Fisher, Wing Chaplain of the 450th Air Base Command. Brother Fisher was up for retirement soon and wanted to leave a heritage to the men. I was met at the air terminal by a Filipino soldier in a limousine. He was to be my orderly while on base and took me to a luxury apartment which was to be my home. It was stocked with all kinds of liquor when I arrived and with the same amount when I left.

The next morning, which was Sunday, I was to speak in three Protestant Chapels, one immediately after the other. My car was awaiting when I finished at one to hustle me over to the next one. I was saddened by the fact that I could not talk directly to the men, shake hands with them, and share with them. That evening I spoke to the Protestant men of the base at the fourth chapel, following a barbecue. I answered questions from the audience. They were a different kind of questions than one hears in civilian life.

There followed in succession in coming days a meeting with the Junior Youth Group, a bunch of young people, some of whose fathers were flying the skies over Vietnam, and a dinner with a High School Group, during which I fielded their questions and learned a lot about their hangups. I ate at the Officers' Club, and often had early breakfast with men dressed in their

flying suits who could be in the air in the next hour with the Far East as their destination. We explored the question of war and its moral force.

One of the most interesting meetings was an address to the 316th Field Maintenance Squadron. Colonel Barner, a bluff Roman Catholic, issued a commander's call, which meant that the men in the squadron had to attend or be in the hospital. It was a captive audience. Many were resentful, a few of them openly hostile. In the group were hard-bitten men from the streets of Brooklyn and New York City, farm boys from the wheatfields of Kansas, and sun-tanned lads from ranches in Texas and Arizona. That day I received a lesson in how to weld an army of trained men together out of raw recruits from every walk of life. I began on time and ended on time. There was no dragging of feet in the military.

The last day there were two addresses. One was to the Protestant Women of the base. They were joined by busloads of women from two nearby bases. It was for the women I felt the greatest compassion. They were separated from their men for weeks on end and never knew how they would return, if they did. Life for these women was a cycle of worry and fear. There was the daily dread of the knock on the door to reveal the loss of a loved one on some foreign soil. In the evening we closed with a grand finale, a meeting for everyone. During the time I was on the base I prayed more than I had for a long time. It was easy to sense the loneliness of those I met, people who could establish no routine, who had no certain home.

I went almost immediately to Santa Clara, California, to speak at the Sunday school convention. It consisted of more than 600 superintendents and teachers, representing every evangelical church in the great valley, except the Church of Christ. It was held in Calvary Baptist Church, and I stayed in the "prophet's chamber" of the church. This was a lovely two-room apartment upstairs. It was well-stocked with food of every

kind, so that one could fix his own meals and even entertain visitors if he liked.

The congregation had started seven years before with twenty-one members meeting in a home. The Sunday following the convention, the goal was 1400. They had registered 1380 the Sunday before. I did not get to talk to the two ministers. They were not there. They were out making calls the entire time. Another spent his time in the hospitals. But I talked to other members of the staff about the phenomenal growth. They attributed it to two things— the people found their needs supplied and the fellowship. The motto of the church was "Where you are a stranger only once, and then only for a few minutes." In addition to speaking each night I also taught two workshops.

But the thing that gave me the greatest satisfaction was an invitation to address the evangelical preachers of the area at a noon luncheon. There were almost 300 present. The president of the group was a Baptist. The man who introduced me was a member of the Salvation Army. It was just the kind of group I had been looking for to try out a new approach to restoration. I spoke on "Renewal through Recovery of the apostolic proclamation, purpose and power." As I spoke I noticed the men taking envelopes from their pockets and hastily jotting down notes. Little did they realize that they were being treated to Thomas Campbell's Declaration and Address, presented in the light of contemporary needs.

I pointed out that renewal was not the creation of something new, but the recovery of something old. We had surrendered a lot of provinces which had to be recaptured. To do this demanded a strategy for world conquest. As I offered them such a strategy, they seemed deeply grateful.

6. God's Peace in Turbulent Times

Drama at Harvard

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In 1958, Erskine Caldwell wrote in the July issue of Atlantic Monthly these words: "I think you must remember that a writer is a simple-minded person to begin with and go on that basis. He's not a great mind. He's not a great thinker, he's not a great philosopher, he's a story-teller." I take a lot of comfort from that observation and rather suspect I am a living example of it, although not too well. If one had to be a great philosopher, this story would wither on the vine.

I began the year of 1969 with a trip to Miami, Florida, where my good brother, Robert Shaw, was ministering to the First Christian Church. It was a Disciples of Christ congregation located squarely in the downtown area. The building was a huge and imposing structure. In former days it had been filled to capacity in the fall and winter. The preacher in those days had specialized and speculated on prophetic interpretation and "snow-birds" from the north filled the place. There were almost as many on Sunday night as on Sunday morning. Many of the wealthy and sophisticated northerners came to know each other and looked forward to seeing each other at the church when the first flakes began to fly in Michigan and Ohio.

But the scene had changed. Cubans had flocked into Florida and settled in the city center. The old stores moved out and Spanish-speaking people surrounded the church location.

Many of the new arrivals were Catholic. Many others had no religious affiliation at all. The audience got down to about 250. They made a little huddle in the midst of the great structure designed to seat fifteen hundred. They talked with nostalgia about the great days of yesteryear and dreamed rosy dreams of the past. Some of them were still possessed of courage. They wanted to relate to their changing world.

I held sessions every night during which I sought to speak with encouragement and "strengthen the things which remained." The church was suffering with internal pressures. The question of restructure troubled them. Brother Shaw was a conservative in the truest sense. Each morning I held a meeting during which I sought to answer the questions of those who were present. Men came from the Independent Christian Churches and from non-instrument Churches of Christ. Some of the questions were particularly touchy.

I recommended that all those who wanted to maintain the faith as it was once delivered exchange addresses and start a little paper to be circulated among all, keeping each other informed as to their plans. I suggested at a Minister's Breakfast that there were surely some areas in which all who loved Jesus could work together. I further suggested that the preachers of all groups meet and eat together each month and discuss the mutual problems in such a great national "playground." I was speaker at a luncheon at the Exchange Club one day. I spoke of the need of the recapture of a moral dynamic for America. It was pleasing to see the response.

The following month I was back in Central Florida for the Annual Spring Spiritual Clinic which was held on successive nights in Orlando, Cocoa and Daytona. As my policy was, following my speech in each of these places, I invited questions from the audience. As was generally the case this proved to be the most interesting feature of all. Some of those in the audience had evidently been saving up their questions and finally found a

chance to use them.

I next went to the School of Christian Living in Louisville, Kentucky. Each night the chief of police and I addressed the audience upon the spiritual and ethical phases of the Christian walk. During the five days I was there I spoke 17 times. I addressed Circle-K at Kentucky Southern College, spoke to 1100 students at Seneca High School; to the entire student body at Old Kentucky Home High School, in Bardstown; and to the Junior High School at Boston. It was a real pleasure to share with these young people, some of whom were very brilliant and perceptive, and give them hope. It must be remembered that the Vietnam War was still going on, the draft was a way of life for young men, and there was a genuine struggle in their emerging consciousness as to what was right and what was wrong.

I addressed a noon luncheon of the Kiwanis Club at the Executive Inn, and spoke to the faculty and students at the College of the Scriptures. This was a black school primarily operated to train preachers of the good news. I met and shared with them. During the time I was in Louisville I was on a one hour open line program over WFIA. The listeners zero in on anyone who tries to answer their questions. I enjoyed the give-and-take of it.

I rode one night with the police. I reported at headquarters and was assigned to a squad car until midnight. Then we returned to headquarters and I rode with two other men until 3:00 a.m. It was astonishing the different kinds of calls that were received. I was allowed to go in with the police. We refereed family fights, picked up sodden drunks, investigated a robbery, and broke up a gang fight at an all-night eatery. I came to have a tremendous respect for the "men in blue." All with whom I rode were young and a part of "the new breed" who deserve a lot of credit.

March 26-28 found me at Scottsbluff, Nebraska, at Platte

Valley Christian College, where I spoke five times. The audience came from long distances and people were present from Colorado, Wyoming and Nebraska. While I was there I granted an interview over the radio at Station KOLY, and another over television KSTF-TV. In addition to this I held a dialogue session at Nebraska Western College. Many of the students were from farms and ranches in the area. I found them alive to what was happening in the world but generally more conservative than their counterparts back east.

On the last day of my stay there, news was flashed over the wires, of the death of Dwight David Eisenhower, at the age of 78. He returned from the European theater of war as a hero to become the 34th president of the United States. The nation mourned his passing and Nell and I went to see the train bearing his body back to Abilene as it came through our city. It was swathed in black bunting. Ike was buried close to his simple old-fashioned childhood home. His mother had been a Bible-reading woman who was opposed to all armed conflict. Her son had planned D-Day with its frightful toll of life.

It was about this time I received a call from Dr. Krister Stendahl, inviting me to Harvard University to deliver an address before the Divinity School on the theme "Toward A Conservative Ecumenism." I accepted and on April 7 appeared in Braun Room at the school where the lecture was to be given. I was to speak for thirty minutes, to be followed by three reactors to my speech. Then I would have fifteen minutes to reply, following which the audience would question me for thirty minutes. The only catch was that the audience did not want to stop when the hour was up.

The three reactors were all men of stature and prominence in the theological world. Dr. Stendahl, who was first, was Dean of the Divinity School and a recognized leader in the World Council of Churches. He had, but a short time before, delivered a position paper at the convention in Uppsala, Sweden. Dr.

William Robert Hutchison was Professor of the History of Religion in America. He was born near Washington, Pennsylvania, where Thomas Campbell lived and wrote "The Declaration and Address." Dr. Hutchison knew the restoration movement topside and bottom. Starting out life as a Presbyterian, he had since become a Quaker, a position which he found more comfortable because of the historic emphasis for peace. The third reactor was James Valentine Fisher, a Ph.D. candidate, and a brilliant student. He was the son of Chaplain Fisher who had arranged for me to be at Langley Air Force Base.

I began with a definition of ecumenism which lifted it out of the political wrangle in which it had become engaged, and separated it from the various theological interpretations placed upon it. I then showed the extent, nature, place and purpose of the unity we seek. I affirmed that under the prayer of Jesus, whom I recognized as Lord, we were obligated to seek the unity of all those who believe in him through the apostolic testimony. Therefore, any attempt at a confederation of so-called world religions was not only foreign to the design of heaven but would do despite to the divine purpose and plan "which was to unite all things in one, in Christ Jesus."

Dr. Stendahl commended my distinction between *kerygma* **and** *didache***, and pointed out the initial message to the world was referred to as the gospel, or good news, as distinguished from the doctrine, in which all of us are obligated to grow as a natural effect of our acceptance of the message concerning Jesus. His prime objection was a fear that, in our attempt to get rid of traditional forms and fixtures, we would be ensnared into the common trap of devising other structures which would enslave men more than those from which we had escaped. Dr. Hutchison traced the course of the restoration movement and its multitudinous divisions, ticking them off on his fingers, and expressed the maxim that "by their fruits ye shall know them." He felt that the only thing he could expect was more division,**

and not more unity. He thought it was like inviting a fox into a chicken house to unite the chickens. He might accomplish his purpose but Dr. Hutchison did not relish the idea of how and where it would be done.

Dr. Fisher objected that too little had been said about the *pneuma*, or Spirit, as the uniting power. My reply to all of this was that the men had preconceived what they thought I would say and had already formed their reactions before hearing it. Consequently, they had to give their speeches whether they were appropriate or not. I had not appeared as a defender of the restoration movement, and had not even mentioned it. I was there as an apologist for a conservative ecumenism and wherever it took me I was willing to go regardless of my past, just as Dr. Hutchison was no longer a Presbyterian.

Present for the confrontation was the Secretary of the Archdiocese of Boston. I met her before the encounter and she told me that the archdiocesan council was greatly concerned with modern trends and had sent her to glean what I had to say about a more conservative ecumenism. She took copious notes while I was speaking and again when I answered questions. It would have been interesting to know what transpired when she reported back to the council.

The Boston Globe had a reporter present also and the write-up in the paper next morning was quite lengthy and gave a lot of coverage. It was made to appear as a debate between Dr. Stendahl and myself, an idea I had earnestly sought to avoid. The report pretty well ignored what the other speakers had said, primarily because, as I suspect, the reporter did not know what they were talking about.

The student body was composed of some fine dedicated students who regarded the Bible as the norm. I could strengthen them. But it was the day of revolt and some who were present challenged everything held sacred in the past. They worshipped

at the shrine of the god of the *Now* and paid homage to every freakish idea that was deemed to be new. I felt a real sense of compassion for churches which would be saddled with these restless young swaggering bullies.

6. God's Peace in Turbulent Times

Still More Drama at Harvard

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Our last episode found me at Harvard, and a more unlikely or less qualified individual had probably never graced the premises there in the long history of the Divinity School which was set up in 1816. Nevertheless, Dr. Joseph Fletcher who had written the controversial book "Situation Ethics" heard that I was there and sent me an invitation to join him in his class on "Verbal Tools in Situation Ethics," at the Episcopal Theological School in Cambridge.

I confess that I went with a warped preconceived idea of the kind of person who would produce such a liberal theological volume as he had turned out, and which was sparking all kinds of attack from the religious community. I fully expected to find a gay young "swinger" of about thirty-five years of age, with long hair and a beard, dressed in hippie garb, smoking a pipe, and wisecracking his way through class at every turn. You can imagine my surprise when I found a grandfatherly type, clean-shaven with a short haircut, and wearing a conventional suit of rather somber gray. The truth is that he was attired much more conventionally than I was.

The class consisted mostly of students for the Episcopal clergy, and it was obvious from looking at them, what a wide degree of variance that hoary fellowship tolerated. I had "cut my eye teeth" on the works of men from the Episcopalian clergy

system— Alan Cole, John R. W. Stott, Michael Green, and J. I. Packer, all of whom were part of the "Evangelical Fellowship of the Anglican Communion." Their knowledge of and emphasis upon the word of God was a far cry from some of the wild ideas of these young men. I was thrilled to be among them and to affirm my faith not only in the need for a revelation but in the revelation given to meet that need.

Dr. Fletcher proved to be both modest and gracious. He introduced me to the class of about forty and invited me to participate during the two-hour session. He asked me for my definition of *agape*, which he laughingly suggested might need to be defined for modern secular man. He defined it simply as "active concern" for others. We discussed the implications of it, and talked about the seeming difference between Paul's theology and that of our Lord. He was quite convinced that, in going to the Greek world, Paul placed certain elements in the message that Jesus never intended. I was quite convinced of the opposite. It made for an interesting exchange. I remained behind with the students to talk and answer questions after he had left the room. It was a morning well-spent.

That evening a group of students under the banner of the Students for a Democratic Society, all slanted toward Marxism, occupied the University Hall and ejected the deans and administrators, and locked them out of their offices. They rifled drawers and files, and obtained some secret and classified materials and documents which began to appear in *Old Mole*, the appropriately named underground newspaper. The Harvard authorities tried to negotiate with them all next day to get them to abandon the building. The students were adamant and flushed with a sense of victory, and they had no success. They filed a list of grievances which they sent to Dr. Nathan Pusey, president of the institution.

Between three and four o'clock the next morning several hundred police moved in and stormed the place. They used only

such force as was necessary, but they dragged the students bouncing down the stairs, cursing and screaming obscenities, and herded them into buses commandeered as "paddy wagons" and hauled them off to various and sundry jails. Just as they hoped it would, their forcible arrest created a real furor at the school and almost the entire student body rebelled. It was apparent that they had been looking for an incident which would spark an uproar.

I sat in on a meeting of the faculty and students of the divinity school, called to determine the policy they should pursue and the direction they should take. Richard Niebuhr presided as a representative of the administration. Harvey Cox was present as a kind of strolling ambassador and mediator. The student president was a radical revolutionary. He was dressed in a bizarre costume which made him look as if he had just drifted in from a reservation. He had a necklace of bear claws around his neck and a ring in one ear. One student suggested it should have been in his nose. He was thoroughly committed to overthrow the existing order. When the shouting subsided he made the proposal that they seize the Divinity School, Andover Hall and the World Religion Center, and hold them "till hell freezes over" or student rights were recognized. Another took the floor and said he was glad to learn that he believed in hell, because he had been denying its existence up until now. Finally enough quiet was obtained to take a vote. The more conservative element won by such an overwhelming majority that the leader and a smaller group of cohorts stamped out of the hall.

Harvard Yard was filled with milling students. There were a lot of young agitators present who were not students and had no connection with the school. Communist slogans and literature were everywhere. Most of it seemed to favor Castro and Chairman Mao. It must have been already printed and rushed in on heels of the revolt. "The Albatross," a hard rock band, set up on the steps of Memorial Church and banged and howled, adding to the general din and confusion. Shortly after noon Dr.

Pusey appeared. He walked through the milling crowd like the children of Israel did through the Red Sea. He paid no attention to the jeers and catcalls, and to the occasional obscenities. He was as cool as a cucumber. And that coolness won the battle. In a few days the condition had subsided and gradually things returned to normal.

I conducted small group meetings in various homes and estates while in the area. On Monday night I was at the Wellington home in Mattapan; on Tuesday night in the Edmonds home in Billerica; on Wednesday night in the Van Voorhis home in Bedford, and on Thursday in the Hill home in Medfield. In everyone of these people prominent in various circles met for discussion of the word of God and their lives. On Friday morning I met with a gathering of ladies at the Kaplan home in Bedford. At this I spoke about our great hope through the resurrection of Jesus. On Friday night some 200 people gathered for a farewell meeting in the auditorium of Bedford High School. It was a great time of rejoicing in the Lord.

On July 19 the papers heralded the death of Mary Jo Kopechne. She was in an automobile which went off a bridge on Chappaquiddick Island, Massachusetts. The circumstances of her death were very suspicious and it seemed that a blanket was thrown over the investigation. It has dogged the steps of Senator Edward Kennedy ever since, and will undoubtedly play a part in the future of any bid he may make for the presidency. There are too many unexplained aspects of it to sweep under the rug.

On July 20, 21 Neil Armstrong stepped from the lunar module Eagle to become the first man to walk on the surface of the moon. We hurried home to watch it on television. As I sat in our living room and beheld those first "bunny-hops" I was seized with a feeling that things would never be the same. We were entering another stage of man's existence. It would be like the Stone Age, the Iron Age, the Machine Age. The Space Age marked another milestone in human progress. It would require

a "new man for our time" as Elton Trueblood came to put it.

On July 3-5, 1969, Nell and I went to West Islip, New York, for the Fourth Annual Unity Forum. West Islip was a dream that did not really become an actuality. It began as an Exodus movement. A number of Texas people were transferred at the same time to the northeast where they expected to become the nucleus of a thriving congregation and the seedbed from which to start others all over the New England States. It ended in disillusionment. The people were no different in the new location than they had been in Texas, and in some cases, that was not good. But the unity meeting was great.

It brought together Dwain Evans, Leroy Garrett, Robert Fife, Robert Shaw, J. Harold Thomas, Floyd Rose, Arthur W. Boone and me. Floyd Rose, an outstanding black brother from Toledo, Ohio finally stole the show. He told about his work as a mere boy with Marshall Keeble, and how they were not allowed to stay in the homes of white brethren in the meetings. He talked about a rope through the middle aisle to separate the two races and told how a black preacher took the confession of the blacks who came down, and a white preacher did the same for the whites. Half of the audience was weeping unashamedly when he finished. It was clear to see that Churches of Christ had a miserable record to answer for on their treatment of the race question. Nell and I went to New York City with Don Haymes and his dear wife and saw the frightful conditions under which they labored for the Lord.

It was about this time a new little magazine was launched which was to have an effect far beyond its size. It was called *Integrity*. The editor was Hoy Ledbetter, a tremendous and capable brother. He was also fearless as one needs to be who undertakes such a work of faith in spite of the opposition of the entrenched forces of the establishment. The first issue contained articles by Dean Thoroman, John Smith, David Elkins, and Frank Rester. The paper drew fire from its very beginning

because it dealt with subjects which had always been concealed by the church, but it has survived to this day.

I had gone for "Inspiration Week" to Northwest Christian College at Eugene, Oregon. As soon as my plane landed I was whisked away to a student lounging place called Carriage Trade Coffee House where I was due to be on a call-in program on the radio any time. I went to the college and had lunch with the football team and found that four of them had been meeting every night for prayer. They agreed to set up a meeting for me with the student body of the University of Oregon next evening when I finished speaking for the Christian College. About 325 persons assembled and sat on the floor when I walked into the great Sigma Chi lounge. I began by divesting myself of any sectarian label and appeared before them as simply one of the fellowship of the unashamed. As I talked and answered questions an emotional wave swept over these young people, some of whom had been guilty of gross sins. It continued far into the night on the outside of the building, with weeping and prayers.

It was August 19-21 when I went to the Rocky Mountain Men's Roundup which was held at Como, Colorado, far up in the mountains. It was at Rocking-R ranch and 300 men were present. Most of them stayed over and slept in the bunks at the camp. Present with me were James DeForest Murch who deplored camping out and did not stay to the close, and Don DeWelt who did like it. The latter had been on a mission to Australia, and was on his way home. The slides he brought with him added much to the meeting. I spoke on fellowship each morning and night and the men ate it up. In spite of incessant rain which made it unseasonably chilly we had a great time and a beautiful meeting.

It seems as if the Spirit of the Lord is more apparent in some gatherings than in others. I can testify to His presence in the meeting with these men, many of whom came from ranches

and farms. They truly loved the Lord.

6. God's Peace in Turbulent Times

"How Did Jesus Get in Here?"

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The year of 1970 dawned with the war in Vietnam still draped like an albatross around the neck of the nation. The potential for violent protest hovered like a malign stormcloud over the land. No one knew where it would touch the land next with its bombing and murder. The decennial census revealed some strange things. We had passed the two hundred million mark for the first time. The figure was 203,235,298. One-tenth of our citizenry was now over 65. Three-fourths of them were urban dwellers. One eighth were nonwhite. California had overtaken New York as the most populous state. The tide of immigration had shifted from eastern to western flow.

On February 25, a branch of the Bank of America went up in flames as a result of an antiwar protest at the University of California in Santa Barbara. It seemed that the licking tongues of flame were reaching out to consume our way of life. President Nixon announced his intention of withdrawing an additional 150,000 troops from the stinking cesspool of Vietnam the next year. Then on April 29 the war was escalated when the U.S. and Vietnamese forces began a major invasion of Cambodia.

This triggered massive protests across the land. At Kent State University in Ohio, national guardsmen opened fire upon students protesting the war. Four were killed. Many more were injured. It never was successfully proved that any of those killed

were in active protest. The incident triggered rebellion throughout the land. Frustrated young people reacted, often in blind rage. By my birthday, on May 10, a student strike center at Brandeis University, announced that 450 institutions of higher learning had been closed down or were experiencing student antiwar strikes.

One of the places where unrest was surfacing was Illinois State University at Bloomington. At the very height of the ferment, the Christian forces on campus decided to inject the philosophy of the Prince of Peace into an ugly situation. InterVarsity, Christian Collegians, Campus Crusade, the Navigators, and Baptist Student Union, temporarily transcended their various methods of procedure, and invited me to come for a happening which was simply called "The Way." It was a happy designation. It was publicized by posters on the campus and in the daily newspaper.

The leaders were sharp enough to realize that unless there was a direct confrontation between the forces of belief and unbelief, between the followers of Jesus and those of the pagans, the meeting would avail nothing. There had to be the actual clash of verbal swords in face-to-face combat. They arranged for that, although, as it turned out, there were unexpected elements which could not be foreseen or provided in advance. These only served to heighten the tension and suspense.

I arrived on the scene the afternoon previous, just in time to see four hundred students wearing black armbands, in honor of their fallen comrades at Kent State, marching to the cemetery in a "Death Walk." Not a word was spoken as they walked along. Blacks, whites, Orientals, they trudged along the sidewalk, with only the shuffle of their feet marking their progress. In the cemetery they sat in silence with bowed heads, among the stones and granite markers, and then marched back. That night they slept on the ground in the quadrangle in what was advertised as a "sleep out for peace."

At 9:00 a.m., the following morning, I spoke to the combined forces of Christian students in Adlai Stevenson Memorial Hall on "How Did Jesus Get in Here?" I pointed out that he entered the earth, cradled in the womb of a woman, and He entered Jerusalem on the back of a donkey, to be acclaimed king. But he entered Illinois State in our hearts. He would be as effective as we allowed Him to be. He would be as bold, as brave, and as courageous as we were. And I pointed out that although the apostles were unskilled and unlearned, their opponents "took note of them that they had been with Jesus." After answering questions for two hours from a hall that was filled to capacity, I went to the cafeteria in the Girls Dorm, where we continued to talk about the things of the Spirit with some thirty Christian young women.

At 1:00 p.m. I was scheduled to meet in open dialogue three professors who were agnostics. It was to be a clearcut encounter with raw doubt and blatant unbelief. The lounge was filled with every kind of student. Included were several black activists. There was a Buddhist present. These hardly knew what to do or how to react toward me when I extended my hand and welcomed them. They were afraid of losing ground if they exhibited any kind of fraternity with "whitey." I had nothing to lose and everything to gain. My theme was "The Transforming Dynamic." I affirmed the intrusion of God into our universe on a revelational and personal plane. I knew where that revelation was found and I knew the person. I pointed out that Jesus was the only revolutionary who changed the world without burning it down.

Dr. Joel Vernon was the first reactor. He had been the son of a Baptist minister but had sold out on his faith. In a speech larded with profanity and four letter words, and obscenities, he branded the new covenant scriptures as a compilation of "myths and damned fairy tales" written to frighten the gullible out of their wits. He was in the Department of Political Science.

He was followed by Dr. Joseph Grabill, of the Department of History. He charged Christianity with creating a coverup to evade reality by the use of traditional words. The last was the eminent Dr. Martin McGuire of the Department of Anthropology. He asserted there was only one brotherhood of the flesh created over millions of years of developmental progress in kinship with animal life.

There was a deep silence as I rose for my ten minute summation and reply. To lessen the feeling I called the men by their first names. I was older by far than they. But all seemed to sense that it was now or never, the battle lines had been drawn. The time for a showdown had arrived. I pointed out that profanity was not proof and expletive was not explanation. It is generally employed by those who face something with which they cannot cope on rational grounds. I said Joel had started rebelling as a child according to his own testimony, and he was still at it in the same way. I urged him to grow up and face the issue, and not try to smother his inability to do so under the cover of swearing. Surely in his studies of political science he should have developed an adequate vocabulary. I pointed out that while he had made a blanket statement that the word of God consisted of "damned fairy tales" he had not given us a single one of them.

Joseph Grabill needed to realize that words which had been tested and tried were not merely traditional terms but were as modern as the morning newspaper. I mentioned that in his speech he assumed to speak only in traditional words for there were no others by which he could convey his meaning. Tradition means "handed over, or handed down," and anything from the past had to be described in such terms. There was no better word to describe our problem than sin, and no better one to portray our condition than lost. It was the "lostness of man" which resulted in his loneliness, alienation and depression. Man had cut himself loose from his roots. He was forming a cut flower civilization. It looked good but it was not alive.

I expressed my appreciation for the scholarship of Martin McGuire who had gone to almost incredible lengths to achieve his doctorate in anthropology. But I pointed out that the "brotherhood of the flesh" of which he spoke originated in the jungle and was fast taking us "back home." It was based upon the "law of fang and claw." It worshipped the idea of "the survival of the fittest." It glorified the concept that "to the victor belongs the spoils." The only real brotherhood worth having was that which originated from a relationship to the same Father, the Creator of us all. In it we could constitute a family of peace and tranquility.

While I was answering the professors, a young black Muslim arose and stepped forward, taking his position directly in front of me. He demanded to be heard in the name of Allah. It was evident to see that he craved attention. He grasped at the chance of using our meeting to secure it. I smiling said, "Although I do not see your name on the program, you go ahead and I'll listen, since it is obvious that if I go ahead, you will not, and I want you to hear what I am saying." He let loose a tirade against Jesus as a white man's God, used by the western culture to enslave his ancestors. He accused white slavers of being rapists and filled with brutality.

When he ceased speaking, I replied softly. I kept my eye fixed firmly upon him during the entire incident, never allowing it to waver from him for a minute. He became uncomfortable at my gaze and his own eyes shifted from side to side. I told him that he was speaking of a different Jesus than the one I was defending. My Jesus was color blind. I pointed out that he was always interested in the poor and depressed. He would not exploit anyone. He branded people like the traders in human lives as hypocrites. No one ever raped another by following Jesus but by departing from his teaching. Jesus was an advocate of the philosophy of "the second mile" lifestyle. Indeed, it was Jesus dwelling in me that made it possible for me to love him. Muttering that he did not want my love, he turned and left the

room.

After this interruption I finished my answer to the reactors and closed with prayer for them. It appeared that I had been in control of the situation throughout, although there was a time or two when it approached the explosive point. But love had won the day. Later that evening I addressed a student rally which was held in Wesley Foundation headquarters. I spoke on the theme "How to Really Get in the Way." I answered questions for another hour, and we explored the Christian attitude toward sex, war, social reform, and other pertinent themes. It was my suggestion that the Christians take over the quadrangle for a full day, and make it an arena in which they took on all comers. They could challenge the neo-paganism openly and it was better to fall in battle than to be nibbled to death by mice.

When I finished at ten o'clock it represented a full day of direct encounter and dialogue. For thirteen hours I had been on the firing line testing the sword of the Spirit against the best the enemy had to offer. I was tired but keyed up for anything. I flew back to Saint Louis that night, and virtually the whole distance I prayed for those I had met. It had been a fruitful day.

I would not have you think that all of 1970 was like the encounter I have just described. There were moments of tranquil meditation and joy. There were times when I could draw a little apart from the multitude and refresh myself by study and meditation. I availed myself of every such moment. But generally there was activity of some kind and I traveled from one end of the country to another preaching the gospel of peace without compromise and emphasizing the hope which makes that gospel "good news." In fact, one of the great things that happened during the year occurred in February. It was notable because of things which transpired which were not on the program. But I will have to tell you about it in the next installment.

6. God's Peace in Turbulent Times

The Dawn of the 1970's

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One of the great regions of our land is that which has been designated Appalachia. It is ill-defined and no one can tell where it begins or ends, or where its boundaries are. It was fortunate in being settled by a people who were often poor but proud, and who were adept in adjusting themselves to wringing a living from the impoverished hill land in which their little farms were snuggled. These settlers were independent, resenting intrusion from the outside and keeping alive their traditions regardless of cost.

One of these was the Appalachian Preaching Mission. All of the evangelical congregations in and around Johnson City, Tennessee, join together for a week of proclamation once per year. That is, all but the Church of Christ. Services are held at noon in a downtown theater, and at night in the field house of East Tennessee State College. Businesses and industries close down at noon to give their employees an opportunity to attend the meetings. A different person presides each day, including the mayor, the president of the Chamber of Commerce, the president of the college, the head coach of football, etc. Ushers are drawn from various civic groups. One day the Lions Club, the next the police and firemen, the next the Rotary Club. It is a unique situation providing an opportunity for a united effort in proclaiming a common belief in Jesus Christ in spite of differences in dogma and doctrine.

In 1970 I was selected to be the noonday speaker. I delivered five addresses. There were 450 present for each of these. At night, Dr. Walter Judd, Kenneth Chafin, John Anderson, C. M. Ward, and Wayne Smith spoke in turn. It was the kind of thing which could happen only in this area of rugged individualism. I was invited by the president of the college to sit in a meeting of the entire faculty group and make suggestions as to how to deal with the problem of student rebellion. I was amazed to see the deep spiritual commitment of many of the faculty. The meeting began with prayer which I was asked to direct.

One day I was being interviewed over the local television station when the show was caught by the football coach. He called the studio and arranged to pick me up when I went off the air. I went to the school where the football players were in session. He introduced me and I spoke to them for fifteen minutes, witnessing to them what Jesus had done in my life. I then took their questions. I went to dinner with two students who wanted to talk with me. One was a lad who was a half-Jewish kid. He wanted to know how he could obtain what I seemed to have, an unflappable ability to face whatever garbage life flung in my direction with a smile. He confessed to me that he had tried sex, done the sex bit, and was now trying to find his identity and the answers to life by being into the contemplative, meditative, esoteric Far-East religions. I told him that he could stare at his navel until the sun went down and never find anything revealed except a thread or a raveling, but if he saw Jesus as I did, he would have to get up off his haunches, put his clothes on and start marching. He would have to be a part of the personal answer to the world's woes and problems.

One week later I was at a convocation of college and career young people at French Lick, Indiana. It was held in the great resort hotel which was built in the days when this was one of the outstanding spas in the United States. The wealthy came in their private railroad cars to take the baths. Although the luxury had

somewhat faded since it had become a convention hotel, it was still fancier than anything most of us had ever seen. We ate together, talked together, and prayed together. Our lives were refreshed by men of stature who had prepared well. I was resource man in the scriptures. On Sunday morning we partook of the Lord's Supper at our respective tables. Each little group of twelve participated as they wished. There were 644 enrolled for the affair. It was the largest group which had ever attended this annual event, sponsored by Christians Unlimited. One of the highlights for me was to see Jim Bevis, who came to stay with me during the sessions. The one time I had seen him before he was a minister of education at Broadview Church in Lubbock. Bill Banowsky was the minister.

I went next to Santa Ana, California, and the First Christian Church, a beautiful structure, presided over by Gerald S. Bash and James Stock. My theme was "A New Look at the Book of Acts." But it was the "extra meetings" in which I found the greatest enjoyment. Most of these were set up by "Skip" Stock, a restless bundle of energy who was always looking for new worlds to conquer. We went directly from my plane to a beautiful restaurant for a private meeting with a brilliant attorney who was a skeptic at the time. It was while discussing with him that I first affirmed that the source of all authority could not be limited by the authority which proceeded from him, and that we cannot bind God by the commands which he gave to bind us, realizing that He is sovereign. I made use of the fact that Jesus said that all authority was given to him in heaven and on earth, but Paul declared that God excepted Himself from that authority.

Each night after meeting those who wished to do so retired to the beautiful lounge which was on the grounds, and I answered questions until 10:30 o'clock. The time was never long enough. A tragic thing had recently occurred. Pat and Shirley Boone and their lovely daughters had lately been excluded from the fellowship of their congregation because of their growing

conviction that the Holy Spirit worked in our generation as he did in the primitive church. The elders of the Church of Christ in Santa Ana had commissioned their preacher to go and try to restore Pat and Shirley "to the fold." During the process he also "received the baptism of the Holy Spirit," according to his testimony, so he was also excluded. He attended several of my meetings. All of this was fresh on the minds of the people and most of the questions dealt with that subject.

One morning just as we were preparing to open with a prayer a two-hour session for questioning, nine preachers from the Churches of Christ filed in and lined up on the back seat. They were as solemn as a convention of undertakers. It was evident that they had come for a shootout at the old corral. It began immediately. The first one led off with a question intended to trip me up. But I saw through the ruse and answered it. The second followed to take advantage of the first. I fielded every ball that was thrown. For some reason I never felt more at ease. I have never been more comfortable. It was obvious the preachers were losing ground and they became more sarcastic and bitter as the tide of battle flowed against them. Finally, one of them gave the others a signal a few minutes before closing time and they all arose and filed out. I invited them to remain for refreshments but they ignored me. When they had gone someone in the audience let out a loud "Whew!"

Three days later I was on the beautiful coast of Oregon at Newport. Robert Church was the minister. The little city was noted for its ocean fishing and surfing. The congregation had experienced serious trials and a great deal of internal strife in the past but all was peaceable at the time. We had a varied audience for both morning and evening meetings. The local Lutheran minister, the Assembly of God preacher, two Catholic priests, a nun, and several others came regularly. It was at Newport I first met Stanley McDaniel. He was a college professor in northern California. Later he did his doctoral thesis on my life and preaching at Indiana University. It was also a real

blessing to meet the family of my aged brother George Hendrix. A number of them came and took over a small motel and stayed for the entire study. Brother Hendrix was an old-time pioneer schoolteacher. He knew Daniel Sommer, A. M. Morris, and S. O. Pool, names from my own distant past.

One visit I made probably deserves mention. It was to the Abilene Christian College Lectureship. Brother Garrett and I were together. I was invited to speak one night at Southwest Park Christian Church, by Alvin Houser, who was serving as minister. The place was filled almost thirty minutes before the time appointed. A goodly number of professors from the school, together with several visiting speakers, joined with a large delegation of students who were present. I spoke on "Solving Problems of Long Division" and threw it open to the audience for questions. There was not a single untoward minute. On my return I stopped off in Arlington for an address at the Holiday Inn. There were representatives from 17 congregations in attendance, and most were friendly.

It was a notable event for me when I was invited to address the Prairie Young Peoples Association meeting held at Missoula, Montana. This outstanding group celebrated its golden anniversary several years ago. It is made up of Christian youth from the prairie provinces of Canada and from the top tier of states in the United States. There are always friends from other states and provinces in attendance. The meeting at Missoula began in the Snow Bowl Ski Lodge far above the city. It was snowing hard, and after the initial session and snack lunch, taken while sitting on the floor in front of a huge fireplace, it required a snowplow preceding us to get down to the Florence Hotel where everything else took place.

Workshops were carried on all day Saturday, and I made a speech at the lovely banquet that evening. Sunday morning everyone was up early and the Lord's Day meeting was held so that before noon the attendees could be started on the long trek

back to their homes. Each one was provided with a sack lunch. I found myself greatly encouraged to know so many fine young people. The world seemed a little safer for having them.

During the last month of 1970 I went to Houston, Texas for a forum on fellowship. As there was no church building where all could attend we opted for a neutral place, and secured the auditorium of Lanier Junior High School for the night sessions. Noonday meetings were held in the Downtown Y.M.C.A. and provided an opportunity for everyone to ask the questions which they considered worthy. The meetings were attended by representatives of all the churches, but no announcement of them was made publicly by the ministers.

This was the first of two such attempts, and we reached various kinds of Churches of Christ, Christian Churches, and Disciples of Christ, with the message of peace. Some met for the first time and learned they lived on the same street. The second time I invited Ervin Waters to handle the questions with me. I have never worked with a better brother. He was sharp as a tack, having honed his mind through years of debating. It was a real privilege to be associated with him, and we have cemented our friendship as the years have come and gone.

I presented my thoughts for the year in a bound volume of the paper called "Our Living Pattern." At the conclusion of one of the articles I wrote: "If we can ever sense that Christianity is not a law but a life, that it is not a sacrificial code imposed from on high but the sharing in our lot of a God who came down from above, our fears will give way to faith, and our heartaches to hope. We will cease to ride herd on God's sheep and be willing to follow in the steps of the Shepherd. We will substitute the law of love for our love of law, and see the God of goodness demonstrated in all of the goodness of God as manifested unto us."

6. God's Peace in Turbulent Times

Summoned to Come Up Higher

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The year 1971 will be remembered by different people for various reasons. Southern Californians will recall the severe earthquake which resulted in buckled freeways, and 62 deaths, with more than a million dollars of damage. Space enthusiasts will recall it as the year when the astronauts of Apollo 14, led by Alan Shepard, spent 10 hours exploring the lunar surface. Revolutionaries will remember it as the year of the bomb in the basement of the United States Capitol, which resulted in $300,000 damage.

Indians will remember it as the time when Federal marshals occupied Alcatraz Island which had been seized by representatives of various tribes who hoped to make it a cultural center. Theatrical buffs will remember it because of the opening of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington. Felons will call to mind the occupation of the state prison in Attica, New York, when 34 of their number died with 9 of their hostages in the brief battle with state police and sheriff's deputies. Blacks will recall the death of Ralph J. Bunche, under-secretary general of the United Nations, who received the Nobel peace prize in 1950. He was the first Negro Nobel Laureate, and a man of distinction.

Only yesterday headlines screamed these events. The hearts of men palpitated with pride or failed them for fear as

they read them. How much a part of the dim past they now seem. How far away they appear. How remote they are from our present busy lives. There is no Nobel prize for those who labor for spiritual peace. But there is a noble reward at the end of the way. So our own striving for peace among believers went on. It seems almost incredible that I was engaged in 24 meetings in 16 states. These were in a context that reached from ocean to ocean and from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico.

I have recently read again of the travels of the pioneer proclaimers. By steamboat down the Ohio, by stagecoach through forests and across the prairies beyond, and then by horseback along faint trails they made their way. Wherever they went the light shone. Now I can board a jet in Saint Louis and I am within three hours of any place in the United States. What a responsibility this lays upon me. I seem to have accepted the challenge in 1971, for I was away from home more than I was at home. I must tell you about a few of these encounters as they are part of the warp and woof out of which the pattern of life has been woven. But first I must inject a note of sadness for the year was one in which some of my dearest friends were summoned to come up higher.

Bob Haddow was a real inspiration to me. He was completely paralyzed. Yet he became a great reader. He laboriously formed letters and words and wrote to me. He came whenever I was in California in a special van in which his bed could be hauled. His mother always accompanied him, driving the vehicle. Generally his grandmother was also along. He believed in what I was doing. He dreamed the same dreams as myself. I first met Harry Robert Fox, Jr., recently home from long service in Japan, and became convinced that I was in the presence of one of the humblest, most erudite and well-read minds I had ever had contact with. Subsequent contacts did not change my thinking. I wept when I learned that Bob Haddow's spirit had wrenched itself free from its twisted clay tabernacle.

The deaths of Dewey Elliott, of Richmond, Mo.; Noel Sutterfield, of Detroit, Michigan; and Forest Tabor, of Fairplay, Kentucky, made me realize the far-flung regions in which men lived who had affected my life. Then, in rapid succession three more were called home who had been of profound impact in my life. The first was Everett Noel, of Topeka, Kansas. He was one of the first men we met when my parents moved to Topeka. When the church divided, over what now appears to me to be trivia, he stood with us. He was always helpful to my parents during their lives. I am not sure how he looked at what I advocated as God opened my ideas to the wider vistas of His kingdom. I was gradually barred from the church of my childhood and was not invited back to where I had stood as a high school youth and parroted the party line. But I loved them then and I love them now, and I realized that the death of my brother marked the passing of an era.

Louis J. Kappelman was a true man of God. Born of immigrant Lutheran parentage as was I, he accepted the plea to become a Christian only, the first time he heard it at a little Arkansas congregation back in "the sticks." He was honest, hard-working and humble. Amidst all of the pressures and tensions of the party spirit, he "kept the even tenor of his way." I stayed in his home during some of the most dramatic periods I encountered as a preacher of the gospel, when every day brought fresh accusations woven of a tissue of falsehood, and it was refreshing to talk with someone who was unperturbed and tranquil. I learned much from him and his departure wrenched my soul.

Bertha Robinson died at the age of 87, one of the noblest Christian women to ever grace God's footstool. Her life was of no significance among the kingdoms of men, but can never be overlooked in the kingdom of heaven. The cause for which we plead in the Saint Louis area owes its inception to her. Never married to any man on earth she was free to be a member of the bride of Christ. Her entire life was dedicated to caring for

others. She possessed a patience which became proverbial and "admitted openly that she was a foreigner and a refugee on earth." She did not leave home when she died, she went home. Nell and I still talk feelingly of her pilgrimage among us.

Stewart Whyte, of Alton, Illinois, was a real inspiration to me during his life. He was the victim of an incurable condition and succumbed prematurely. Homer Harvey, who was a master of the stonemason's art, and an inimitable carver, died at Middletown, Indiana. Dr. N. Rhoads, a member of an old-time family in our restoration movement died in Eugene, Oregon. I knew I would miss his encouraging letters. My life was impoverished by the deaths of these, all from different states, and different stations in life. Despite the divergency of their interests all had been very meaningful to me.

It was during this year I decided to concentrate my writing on a chapter which had deeply impressed me during my striving toward maturity. As I pointed out in my initial article, "The Ascent of Faith," Romans was the Alps of the new covenant scriptures, and chapter 8 was the Matterhorn, looming high above and towering into the clouds. I analyzed every word in this impressive part of the Book of books, and at the end of the year embodied all of the material in a volume titled "One Great Chapter." It must have touched a tender chord, since we still receive orders for it long after it has gone out of print.

I began the year at the First Christian Church in Escondido, California. The series was called "College of the Bible." It brought together people from the Church of Christ to share with those in the Christian Churches. It was a time of great fellowship. We averaged 300 per night and 150 in the morning sessions. I spoke at various civic and school gatherings with good effect. I was accompanied by Al Karges, genial and hard working.

February 1-3 I was scheduled to deliver the T. H. Johnson

Memorial Lectures at All Faiths Chapel, on the grounds of Kansas State University, under sponsorship of Manhattan Bible College. Each morning we conducted an informal question and answer session at the college. In the afternoons I had an unparalleled opportunity to meet the students at Kansas State. It was during this time I came to admire so greatly Brother William Lown, president of the Bible College. His non-sectarian attitude was refreshing to contemplate.

I went next to University Street Church of Christ at Eugene, Oregon. At the time the charismatic viewpoint was a matter of great concern and many of the questions in the daily forum dealt with the subject. I tried to be as diplomatic as possible. I took the position that I would make no test of fellowship out of one's personal experience to which he testified, nor allow anyone to measure my standing with God by His own experience. This was calculated to maintain fellowship with all and forbid judging of another by anyone on the basis of his own esoteric experience. I still think that these are the two gravest dangers, and of far more harmful tendency than any opinion relative to the work of the Spirit.

The Abilene Christian College Lectureship began on February 22, and I was scheduled to speak that night at the YWCA auditorium. I did not particularly like the arrangement. I did not want to appear in rivalry against the school, despite their opposition to me. There was little chance of my speech being assessed impartially but I made no reference to the school and dealt solely with the agonizing problem of disunity. Later I was invited to meet in an off-campus room with several students. Most of them and their parents were charismatic. The room was packed and we discussed until well after midnight.

March 3-5 found me speaking at the World Vision Crusade at Intermountain Bible College, Grand Junction, Colorado. Brother Erskine Scates was president of the school. He has since died and we have lost a friend and a good man. I

was especially pleased to learn of the work among the Navahos by former students. These had gone on the reservation and lived in hogans, and shared the lives of the Indians as well as the transforming message. They found it easier to relate to these gentle tribesmen than to the world of violence outside. They had learned the language and the traditions and were accepted by even the older men of the clan.

March 15-19 I was back in Oregon, at Newport. I stayed in a home, where I could see the restless waves of the Pacific Ocean foaming out against the shore. It was decided that I should speak about the Holy Spirit because of the unrest concerning His work in our day. I decided to pitch my talks on a positive note. It seemed to me there had been enough negativism. The church had been troubled by various things with no relationship to the current issue, and I did not want to leave them divided over matters relating to the Spirit.

My talks were entitled *The Person of the Spirit*; *The Purpose of the Spirit*; *The Performance of the Spirit*; *The Power of the Spirit*; **and** *The Peace of the Spirit*. **In our morning study, for which the room was filled, we attracted a mixed bag of eager students. Several clergymen of various backgrounds came. We had a large attendance from Churches of Christ. It was interesting to answer their questions and not forget my objective which was a plea for peace.**

I made clear the difference between revelation and interpretation. The first is what God said. The second is what we think He meant by what He said. The first is the disclosure of the divine mind. It is perfect. The second is the application of the human mind to what was said. It may or may not be perfect. We are bound by God's Word. But no man is bound by my understanding of it. Each person upon earth must be free to engage in a private search of the divine revelation, and to deduce what it means for himself. If his deduction differs from mine, one or both of us may be wrong, but we dare not make a test of

one's relationship to God out of his relationship to my understanding of the will of God.

Robert Church, who served the saints at Newport, was in agreement with my method of teaching, and we sailed through nights with a filled auditorium, in which there were Catholic priests and nuns, as well as Lutheran ministers and others. It was interesting to see how eagerly they all learned and how they grew in a love of God in five nights and four days of intense teaching.

6. God's Peace in Turbulent Times

Waging Peace

Contents

One of the greatest blessings which has come to me has been the privilege of working with the Canadian brethren. Their great hospitality, developed in part from a frontier existence not too many decades ago, is proverbial. I have been with them from the maritime provinces on the east to beautiful Victoria in the far west. It was because of this I looked forward with keen interest to speaking at the Prairie Young Peoples Association Conference, held in Yellowgrass, Saskatchewan, April 15-17, 1971.

The congregation at Yellowgrass is unique. Never very large, it has sent out more preachers than any place else I have known. Most of these were educated in the States, and most of them remained in "the lower forty-eight" as these United States are called. I had met many of them and knew a great many other brethren from Yellowgrass before I arrived. Without exception they were all sincere and sacrificing for the Cause of Christ. The conference was excellent. It made possible for the bonds of fellowship to be tightened from Winnipeg to Dawson Creek. It lapped over into the northern tier of states and drew people from all of them.

On Sunday night, after the conference had concluded in the afternoon, brethren had made arrangements for me to speak in Regina, the beautiful capital of the province. The meeting was

held in the Christian Church building. The brethren were in turmoil. There was a division of sentiment as to which direction they should go on "restructure" which was the talk of the Americans in those days. We were favored by having with us four members of the Anglican clergy. They heard me declare the good news as our only hope. I pointed out that, in the final analysis, all fellowship with God was on a personal basis. It was man-to-God. Regardless of what happened to institutions it could not sever the relationship unless we consented to having it do so.

On April 26-30 I was scheduled for a fellowship rally at Phoenix, Arizona. It continued for five nights in the North High School Auditorium. By selecting a "neutral place" it was believed that more people could attend without offending their tender consciences. I was interviewed on radio twice and appeared on television in talk shows twice. In one of these people could call in and ask questions directly. It was interesting to note that while we were engaged in the great and vital issues affecting the whole world of believers, and unbelievers, that questions from members of the Church of Christ all had to do with instrumental music. The fact that we were divided and rent asunder in direct contravention to the prayer of Jesus seemed of no particular consequence. The sordid problem of division had to be aired. The question was no longer "What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?" It was now "What think ye of a piano?"

I went next to Columbus, Ohio for the Central Ohio Ministers' Fellowship, May 12-24. My theme for the series of talks was "Growing Up in Our Understanding of Christian Unity." I gathered that almost all of the men agreed with me theoretically, but lacked a knowledge of how to implement what I was saying practically. Without realizing it was happening, we have been betrayed by circumstances into becoming a non-sectarian sect. We were in partisan competition with other sects about us. We thought we were right and could not be wrong.

They thought the same thing of themselves. We looked upon one who was converted to us as being a convert to Christ. It was obvious that we were in some cases developing a "personality cult" built around the charisma of a preacher. It would take a long time until we grew up in our concept of the unity for which Jesus had petitioned.

Our problem was augmented by fear. We had become afraid to venture beyond our traditions. We were frightened at the thought of experimentation, so no new discoveries of how to work were being made. Like a cow tethered to a stake we grazed in our own restricted circles. The length of the rope determined the area we would cover. Yet, all around us was a world dying for what we could share. Meanwhile we were meeting only with those who agreed with us, and rearranging our prejudices. The only bright spot in an otherwise discouraging picture was that created by a few hearty souls who ignored the brands of men and sought to relate meaningfully to the cross of our Lord.

I stayed with Jeff and Linda Smith. They were some of my favorite people. They had been in Great Britain and we had mutual acquaintances there. It was wonderful to be in their home. Jeff was a student at the university and I got to visit it. It was a great buzzing beehive of activity. On May 24, I went to James River Chapel, south of Springfield, Missouri, where I was among friends I had known since my boyhood days. I held my first meeting in the area when I was fifteen and had returned often. For five nights I spoke on the theme, "Will the Real Jesus Please Stand Up?" I showed how we had constructed our own images of Jesus which were not real at all. We had caricatured him only to satisfy our own longings and ideas, but behind the masks we had created stood the real Jesus, still longing to help us.

June 7-11 I began at Highland Church in Louisville. Ernest Lyon ministered to it. It had known some of the great men of the past. Among them was E. L. Jorgenson, who had

come from a Scandinavian settlement in Nebraska to become one of the great song compilers of his era. With his goal, the upgrading of the vocal music of the congregations, he was led to bring out *Great Songs of the Church*. It caught on. He had hit upon the idea of alphabetizing the hymns in several categories. It was a privilege to be in his home and to share experiences with him. He had ministered in Toronto, and had been instrumental in introducing Claude Witty and James DeForest Murch.

These two men began a series of "unity meetings" in 1936. They had agreed that "tradition, creedalism, provincialism, institutionalism, Pharisaism, extremism, indifference, self-sufficiency, ignorance, proselyting, distrust, and all the imps of Satan were running riot. The leadership of the churches were not calling for unity. There was no great uprising of the rank and file demanding it. Yet we, as a people, had preached it; we ought to practice it."

Men from both sides risked their futures and engaged in irenic discussion. I opposed it with characteristic ignorance. We were the loyal church and that was it. Finally, the radical element from both sides shot down the meetings. Foy E. Wallace had bitterly opposed them in the south. They came to nought because the brethren were thinking war instead of peace. It was war against brethren and it was much more appealing than war against Satan.

In early July I attended and spoke at the conference on unity at Atlanta Christian College, in Atlanta, Georgia. It was well attended but I came away feeling that more groundwork was needed. The questions showed a strange lack of relevance to the unity of all believers. That passion for oneness had not yet been fanned into flame. Each party was interested in unity which came its way. There was too much of the spirit of the snake and frog which promotes togetherness by the first swallowing the latter. Several years of teaching would have to be done before each was willing to move toward a common center and let Jesus

become the real focal point.

August 2-6 I was back in Oregon at Camp Wi-Ne-Ma for a family camp. It is located in a beautiful spot where hills and mountains drop down to meet the ocean. From my window I could watch huge whales sporting offshore. More than a thousand people were registered. Campers covered the entire area. I was Bible lecturer for the week. In addition, I met with the young people each afternoon. The winds and waves had hollowed out a natural bowl of sand on the shore and we used it for our discussions. All other adults were barred and I could listen freely to the problems and hangups of more than two dozen teen-agers. I was, as usual, deeply impressed with their enthusiasm and potential.

Next I went to the Blue Ridge Men's Clinic, which was held not too far from Grandfather Mountain. This spot is known for its gathering of the clans every year. Dressed in tartans and colorful plaids, thousands of people of Scottish ancestry assemble for a reunion. The sound of the pipes reverberates through wild mountain glens. Scottish dances and games are carried on apace to the exultant cries and cheers from thousands of voices. I know some who have not missed attendance there in years, going back repeatedly to eat haggis and to down Scotch oatcakes.

The clinic featured Beaufort Bryant, Clarence Greenleaf and me, together with 754 other men. It was no place to go to catch up on your sleep. Some men talked virtually through the entire night, huddled around little campfires, and fortified inwardly by coffee which would dissolve shingle nails. They had often stayed up like this while fox-hunting and it was no problem for them.

I went next to Houston, Texas, one of the fastest growing urban areas in our country. What a contrast it was to the peaceful quiet of the mountain regions of the east, where one

could hear the far-off crow of a rooster as he awakened in the morning. Once again, at Sidney Lanier Junior High School I conducted a Fellowship Forum for three nights. It was necessary to define fellowship again for those who had been betrayed into thinking it was something men had the power to extend or withdraw, when in reality, it was a state in which we were simply called to share. To accept one another freely was the greatest blessing to which we had been called.

I have often read a piece of reportorial writing with deep appreciation. I know that a reporter must be selective. He must be judgmental. This means that what is not said may be even more important to another than what is covered. I feel the same tensions in writing this. There was my meeting at Astoria, Illinois, and Canton, Ohio, and the Louisiana State Convention at Shreveport. Everyone of these was important. At Canton I spoke 12 times in five days and addressed three breakfast meetings. Yet space will not permit full coverage of them.

On October 20 I was back at San Jose, California, to deliver the Roy B. Shaw Memorial Lectures. These were, by terms of the will, to be about the restoration movement. My themes were: The Death of A Dream; The Recovery of Reason; and A Faith For the Future. I demonstrated that our restoration movement arose at a certain period in history. It was spontaneous and not planned. It was adapted to the cultural needs of man as he then existed on the frontier. We no longer live in those times. We must launch a new movement dedicated to renewal through recovery of the apostolic proclamation, purpose and power. We must make the ageless gospel meet the needs of the Space Age.

Later I went to the Genessee Church of Christ, near Flint, Michigan, where it was my privilege to stay with Frank Rester and his good family. Then I found myself at Eldon, Missouri where Seth Wilson, Gareth Reece, Russell Boatman and I engaged in a two-day forum on "The Holy Spirit." I closed my

travels for the year at Windsor, Illinois. It was close to Sand Creek, where the division all began. It was there that for the first time the opinions of men were made tests of fellowship, and those who did not conform were told that they no longer would be regarded as brethren. It seemed like a good place to go back to and proclaim the gospel of peace and seek to undo some of the tragic ills which had resulted from an ill-conceived policy.

6. God's Peace in Turbulent Times

Nothing Is As Important As Jesus

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The year of 1972 will never be forgotten by Richard Nixon. It must both thrill and haunt his every waking moment. It was the time of his greatest triumph. On November 7 he was re-elected to serve a second term with a vote well in excess of forty-seven million. In February, accompanied by Henry Kissinger, he had gone to Communist China. The television screens in every American home registered the progress he made in his negotiations. It was a time of exhilaration for him. His goals were being realized. His dreams were coming true.

On the night of June 17 occurred the Watergate break-in. Those who were apprehended had electronic equipment in their possession. The incident was not at first seen in its full potential. The poison in its fangs was well concealed. On June 22, and again on August 29, President Nixon assured the nation that no one in his administration had anything to do with it. But after his re-election, the serpent began to uncoil itself, striking first at this one and then at another. Before it was over the pride of the haughty would be humbled. The dream temple would lie in shattered ruin. A hero would become a villain. And disillusionment would spread like a pall over the nation.

On May 2, J. Edgar Hoover would die of a heart attack in Washington. He was 77 years of age. He had been Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation since 1924. Hated by

Communists and fellow-travelers alike, he had seemed like a towering rock against those who would undermine our national ideals. He had been at the forefront of the battle when roving gangs sought to pillage us. As he grew older, the first accusing fingers were pointed in his direction and he had to reckon with a new kind of opposition. His opponents carried briefcases filled with statistics rather than machine-guns filled with bullets. It was like an old stag brought to bay by the pack yapping at his heels, making his last stand with his back against the mountain. On May 15, Governor George C. Wallace was shot by a 21 year old drifter, Arthur Bremer, in Laurel, Maryland. The day after Christmas Harry S. Truman died in Kansas City, Missouri, at the age of 88.

I began the year in sunny California in Escondido. The "College of the Bible" attracted brethren from all over the region. I spoke each night at the congregation and held an open forum each morning. Men and women seemed intrigued by the fact that they could ask anything they desired. We did not always agree but we had a glorious time in the Lord. No one asked whether you were this or that. It seemed enough that all were in Christ, all wanted to learn, and all were teachable. Between sessions I addressed civic clubs in the area and spoke to other special groups. In all of these encounters I kept in mind the motto of Alexander Campbell: "He that would plead this heavenly cause must stand before the people with peace in his heart, union upon his lip, and truth in his eye."

The last of January I returned to Florida College for the lectureship. An attack upon the principles which I espoused was to be made and I wanted to be present for it. When I was there before, G. K. Wallace, Pat Hardeman and Bill Humble were the prominent figures. All of them had occupied really prime spots on the program. Now all of them were out. Their names were not even mentioned. I met with a number of students, at their request, in a room in the men's dormitory for several hours in the afternoon. They were full of questions. I answered them

without reservation. It was suggested that I appear before everyone and take their queries. The school, which was presided over by James Cope, would not allow such an arrangement as if it were part of the lectureship proceedings. It was arranged that it be held at 10:00 o'clock after all regular activities were over. It was to be in the building of the University Church of Christ.

Standing room only was the word which went forth fifteen minutes before the scheduled time. Every conceivable niche was filled for the meeting which lasted three hours and finally ended at 1:00 o'clock a.m. It provided the greatest excitement of the lectureship. I spoke for thirty minutes on my concept of fellowship. I was followed by Robert Turner, who admitted that he had only read a copy or two of *Mission Messenger*. I then sat down on the platform with Brother Turner, and we were joined by Ferrell Jenkins and Harry Pickup, Jr. It was interesting to watch the men who did the questioning. Some of the older preachers imagined themselves to be prosecuting attorneys with me as defendant. Since I refused to accept the role or play their game they did not know what to do next. They were accustomed to someone who rolled over and played dead when they queried him. An occasional student seized the limelight to establish himself as one of "the faithful." But the majority of the audience listened seriously and soberly.

I am convinced that great good was done, especially with the more observant and erudite students. I have seen reports in the more partisan journals that at least fifty of the most brilliant students in the sect have been affected by my plea. It would seem that this fact alone would cause the party leaders to take thought. If only lazy and sloven students were affected it might be brushed aside as of little consequence, but when top-notch students see the value of the priorities emphasized it is another matter. Since that fateful night in the history of our modern thrust for renewal I have done a lot of thinking about the brethren who oppose support of what we call institutionalism.

I reject the brand of "antis" as applied to these brethren. It is silly and childish. All of us are "anti" on a lot of things. In some respects their contentions are but an extension of some of my own former efforts. But the charge quite frequently made by their opponents that they "out-Sommer" Daniel Sommer is not to be credited. Their position is not the same as his. I knew Daniel Sommer personally. He was often in my home. He ate at my table and shared with me his thinking. The brethren at Florida College are not espousing a warmed-over version of the Sommer ideology.

I think the rise of the party is a phenomenon which occurs at periodic intervals in every group which is based upon a legalistic stance for its survival. The only safeguard against it is the investiture of one man with infallibility, and the universal recognition of him as the authority. As long as that authority is respected and revered the organization will remain intact. It is because of the erosion of authority that the great monolithic structure of the Roman Catholic Church is faced with such problems in our day. The seeds of division are inherent in every legalistic group. Given the correct conditions they will germinate and a fracture will occur.

The regarding of the New Testament scriptures as a written code of laws coupled with the idea that God provided an exact pattern to be meticulously followed in all ages has operated in such a way as to defy the lordship of Jesus and substitute the rule of dominant men. These have generally been editors among the various segments of the Churches of Christ. Sometimes they have been elders who were inflexible. Every time the culture altered, division has occurred. Division is part and parcel of the attitude toward the plan of God. It is not at all a question of respect for the authority of the Word, but of respect for a particular way of looking at it. Many men have deep regard for the revelation of heaven who do not have the same regard for the interpretation of an editor.

As I view it, these brethren are guilty of profound errors in their reasoning. They do not distinguish between the gospel of Christ and the doctrine of the apostles. They do not understand the nature of worship. They do not understand the nature of fellowship. They have arisen as a protest movement against what they considered certain abuses, and allowed it to gravitate into a separate and exclusive party. This was the great mistake. Brethren may think as they wish about the Herald of Truth, and they will do so. They may support it or not support it. They may watch it or not watch it. But when either group creates a party around its deduction it becomes factional. And factionalism is a sin. This makes their opinion as important as the death of Jesus. One must believe it to be regarded as in the faith. It becomes an unwritten creed. But nothing is as important as Jesus— just nothing!

Of course each party attracts those persons who thrust themselves into prominence by intemperate and injudicious statements. They generally prove to be an embarrassment to those who sigh for Jerusalem and are sincerely saddened by division and strife among the saints. Partisan papers agitate the situation by publishing almost vituperative reports against those who disagree with them. H. E. Phillips wrote in *Searching the Scriptures*, a monthly periodical, about "the despicable doctrine of fellowship." Others were almost as uncouth in their attacks. But none of these things move me. The road of a reformer has always been a rocky route to travel. But there are great rewards.

Changing the subject, two deaths occurred during the year that were of some significance. Alexander Campbell Johnson, Jr., died at the age of 74. Maria Louise Campbell Barclay died at the age of 105. Both of them were the great-grandchildren of Alexander Campbell. Alexander himself had died on March 4, 1866. It was the Lord's Day and just as it drew to a close he was called to his eternal rest. Now his great-grandchildren were going home at an advanced age.

March 6-10 found me at La Crosse, Wisconsin. Because of a building program our meetings were held in the YMCA building. I arrived just in time to see a member of a rock music group baptized. The leader had been in the hospital as a result of a real bad drug trip, when a candy-striper met him, told him about Jesus, and changed his entire life. His conversion had a great effect upon the other members and one by one they discovered the tug of the Galilean upon their hearts and made the great transformation. They were a jovial group who had tried everything the world had to offer. They conceived the idea of writing Jesus' words to some of their tunes and belting them out to the far-out generation who made the scene.

They suggested that we make a joint appearance on the university campus where they had been "big time" before. I agreed and they secured Presidents Hall. By this time they were calling themselves HOPE, and they put up posters all over the place with our pictures and the inscription "Hope With Carl." I was astounded at the drawing power they exhibited. The great hall filled completely and students and faculty jostled for standing room around the walls. They spilled out into the hall.

For almost an hour HOPE played and sang. I did not understand a word they were saying. They testified of their faith and then introduced me as "The Answer Man." I went for fifty minutes. The questions were terrific. Some tried to trip me up as the Pharisees had done with Jesus. I sailed through the troubled waters without a break. Many of the questions were significant and penetrating. The entire thing was televised. It made the meeting. The night sessions were filled with people. The day sessions produced an interested group who were eager to know. I am pleased to report that all the members of the rock music group went back to school. One became a schoolteacher. The other four became preachers of the gospel. God works in wonderful ways and through all kinds of agencies. How wonderful of His grace to turn drug users into disciples of the Nazarene and into useful servants of His kingdom.

7. The Last Years of Mission Messenger

1972: A Year For Renewal

Contents

On March 13-17, I was with the Northglenn Christian Church at Denver. It was served by my good friend, William Lower. I first met him and his lovely family at Fort Wayne, Indiana. He was an excellent administrator, an apt student and a competent proclaimer of the Word. I stayed in a little camper belonging to one of the brethren. It was pitched at the rear of the church building and it was in a real spot. At night I could see the star-studded canopy of the skies flung above me, unobscured by the smog of our own creation. It was a real place for meditating and I did a great deal of it. Out of my deliberations came an article which was one of my deepest. It was entitled "Spiritual Argonauts" and deals with the nature and essence of truth. It was published in the August issue of Mission Messenger, in 1972, and appears in the volume called "The Divine Purpose." I have never written another to equal it. And I could not have written it if I had not been alone at night on the plains outside "The Mile High City."

March 20-22 found me with the Northside Church of Christ at Grand Rapids, Michigan. I stayed with Patrick Miles and his good wife. They were a wonderful black brother and sister. They had two beautiful children. It must have been rather strange for them having a white man in their home. I caught them staring at me around the door facing as I wrote. Pat was an elder and a good one indeed. He had a grasp of what was

transpiring and was a firm believer in the need for implementing the prayer of Jesus for unity.

While there I spoke at chapel at Great Lakes Bible College and also met with the Campus workers at Michigan State. The school was in the vanguard of the student revolution. They were taking to the streets and marching for any cause, or simply creating an artificial cause and marching anyhow. It was interesting to see them gather momentum and wave their fists and start shouting. It was a great time to be there with the message of "The Indestructible Jesus" when a lot of other things were being reduced to rubble or going up in licking flames. In times like these you need an anchor!

I went next to Newport, Oregon for the third time. I was becoming a regular fixture in this fishing town, so picturesquely sprawled above the wide Pacific. The brethren had established a coffee house mission on the waterfront. To it came sailors from every country possessing a fishing fleet. Here they could find a free copy of the scriptures, sometimes in their native tongue. There was always someone with whom to talk about the lordship of Jesus. A few steps down the wharf was Mo's chowder house, a famed place which looked like anything except a restaurant, but made clam chowder which was out of this world. If you ate too much of it you would be too!

We had decided that the lessons at night should be on the book of Romans. I worked out a series which I designated: Nonsense and Incense; Faith and Futility; The Father of the Faithful; Dead and Delivered; the "As" and "So" of Service. The auditorium was filled every night. The open forum attendance each morning was very gratifying. It was while in this town I found an old friend whom I had known from boyhood in Topeka, Kansas. He had become a judge on the circuit court judiciary.

It was my good fortune to go next to Hoxie, Kansas, where

Darrel Foltz is doing such effective work. While there several members of the Dunkard Brethren attended every night. I learned that they had quite a colony at Quinlan, Kansas, where there were two congregations as the result of an unfortunate split. Realizing that they had descended from the work of Philip Jacob Spencer and Herman Francke, in protest against certain deficiencies in Reformation life and practice, I was anxious to meet with some of them. We went out to the beautiful and fertile farm of one of the leaders. I soon found that they were descendants of the Pietists, and were part of a restoration movement which preceded ours by a century.

The house was plainly furnished. Everything served a utilitarian purpose. It was spotless. There was no television set. A great many of what we consider "modern conveniences" were conspicuous by their absence. The people attired themselves in simple garments which denoted their faith and separated them from the world about them. They practice foot-washing in conjunction with their communion. They hold a love feast annually as a symbol of their affection for one another. I was blessed by being able to talk with them. It was only in recent years they had begun to attend our meetings. They could come and not offend their conscience since we did not have instrumental music. I was much impressed with the unaffectedness of their lives. It was no problem to me to recognize them as brothers and sisters.

It was about this time I learned of the death of two aged saints whose lives had impressed me greatly. One was Isaiah H. H. Moore, 91, of Louisville, Kentucky. He was killed when thrown from an automobile in a three car collision in New Lebanon, Indiana. This humble black man, a direct descendant of slaves, had long worked with College of the Scriptures at Louisville. The other was Charles Bussard, also 91, who was living near Springfield, Missouri, when summoned to his eternal home. He was of hardy pioneer stock, and had spent his entire life within a few miles of his birthplace. Generous, open and

free-hearted he had roots going back to the pioneer days when the English and Scotch people crossed the Appalachians and drifted westward. He had a lot of Elizabethan words in his simple vocabulary.

I traveled next to Elgin, Oregon, for a series of studies on "The Life of the Spirit." I was met at Pendleton by a brother in a light plane. We lifted out of the valley and crossed over a high mountain which stood between us and our destination. We were so close to the ground that I could look down and see bands of wild elk grazing. It was a hunter's paradise. My stay was marred by word of a highway accident which claimed the life of Bernell Weems, of Bonne Terre, Missouri. A preacher of the Word, he died early one morning when his car struck the abutment of a bridge. I was asked to come for the funeral service but could not, as I was scheduled to be the speaker at the commencement at which our oldest granddaughter, Dawn, graduated from the high school at Aspen, Colorado. She was valedictorian of her class and made a fine speech based upon I Corinthians 13.

Following an excellent meeting at James River Chapel, south of Springfield, I was booked next for the camp near Macrorie, Saskatchewan. Word came of the death of J. C. Bunn, at the age of 90, in Washington. In my early boyhood when I was twelve years old, he had announced my first preaching appointment at the little rural church at Old Pearl, in Illinois. My work had "caught on fire" from that fateful night and my destiny was determined. At Macrorie I was associated with Ed Benoit, a member of the provincial parliament for Alberta, sitting at Edmonton. A great student of the Word, and a master of communication he did a tremendous job. We had a great time and saw much good accomplished.

I accepted an invitation to address the College-Career session at the North American Christian Convention. My theme was "The Holy Spirit in the Church Now." After finishing my

assignment I was preparing to leave for home a day early. I was asked to deliver the final morning address as a substitute for Joe Barnett, of Lubbock, Texas, who called to say he was sick and could not make it. There were over 5,000 present and I had to speak primarily "off the cuff." A great many persons whose hearing was apparently defective told me it was the best I had ever done. I still run into people who were present and remind me of the speech. It is enough to discourage one from preparation.

August 11 and 12 I was accompanied by Otto Schlieper and Leroy Long, of Saint Louis, to a men's clinic at Rock Garden Camp in the beautiful Missouri Ozarks. I was associated there with Knofel Staton, currently a professor at Ozark Bible College. Since that time I have been with him in various other meetings here and in Canada. Each time I hear him I become more convinced he is one of the most articulate men among us. His research is so thorough that it leaves nothing to be desired. He is the author of a number of books, all of them good ones. His studies on marriage leave little else to be said. Fortunate indeed are those places which secure him as a speaker.

During September I was at a Family Camp at Little Galilee, near Clinton, Illinois, where Enos Dowling also spoke. The former librarian at Butler School of Religion, he had become associated with Lincoln Christian Seminary. His knowledge of the restoration movement history is unsurpassed. His hobby is collecting old song books prepared by composers in the movement. Among those he has gathered are scores of books starting with Alexander Campbell, and reaching down from the inimitable J. D. Fillmore, to brethren who are still alive and writing. The great transformation that has taken place the past several years betokens the coming of a new reformation. Every such reformation in the past has been launched upon the wings of song.

On September 8, 9 I was at Butler Springs Men's Retreat

in Ohio. It was a blessing for me to be associated with James Smith and Paul Bajko. Paul is from Poland. As I write this he has just celebrated his 25th year in preaching the good news to the Polish people. In 1971 the church in Poland celebrated its 50th anniversary. Paul helped to plant a congregation in Bielsk-Podlaski in 1969. They remodeled an old building to seat about 70 persons. They have since outgrown their quarters and have applied to the government for permission to build a larger one. Since 1969, new congregations have been planted in Poland at the rate of one per year.

I went next to Hilltop Christian Service Camp and spoke at a Men's Retreat. The camp is near Columbus, Indiana, and from it I went directly to Sunbury, Ohio. Then on to Hobbs, New Mexico, where I was surprised to see Brother and Sister W. P. Hutson. They had come to take a motel room next to mine just so we could talk in spare moments. Brother Hutson grew up in a different segment of our brotherhood than had I, but he read *Mission Messenger* **and became entranced by what I was doing. We had great times talking over our past and thinking about the future. The three of us became convinced that we were living in one of the thrilling periods of the church.**

From Hobbs, I journeyed to Corvallis and Beaverton, Oregon. It was my third trip to Oregon during the year. At Corvallis I had the privilege of association with a great number of college faculty and students who were dedicated to Christ Jesus. Our association was unmarred by any kind of difference or friction. Although they came from various backgrounds, under the gentle influence of the Spirit they were drawn together. At Beaverton I was compelled to deal at length with the rise of the charismatic movement. It was beginning to make an impact upon the community. It was a great time to be alive and actively dealing with the problems of the church.

I closed the year at the little Illinois town of Astoria. We had a great series of meetings and I met some fine people. I

returned home to prepare my speech on "Fellowship" for the preachers' workshop at Abilene Christian College. It was to be held January 8-10. As I looked back upon the year just spent I could rejoice in accomplishments for the Cause. I had traveled in every part of our nation, and had gone to Canada as well. Everywhere I found brethren awakening to our needs as a people. It was evident that we were moving into a brighter and better day.

7. The Last Years of Mission Messenger

Getting Acquainted in Texas

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Hershel Ottwell died on Thanksgiving Day, 1972. It was a sad loss to many of the saints, and especially to me. We had grown up together as boys in the country. We used to play together on Sunday afternoons. I was older than Hershel, but we admired and loved one another. He was an excellent teacher. He had devised the fine art of making charts and used them a great deal. He loved to work with small and needy groups and to see them grow. Teddie Renollet and I conducted memorial services. As I saw him lying there with his lips sealed by death I realized that one of God's noblemen had been mustered out of the church militant. We had said farewell to one of the great proclaimers of the Good News.

The year of 1973 had hardly begun when it brought news of the death of an ex-president, Lyndon Johnson. He died of a heart attack while enroute from his ranch to a hospital in San Antonio. Always a controversial figure, the world still argues over some of his decisions. He was buried in a humble shaded family plot upon the banks of the Pedernales River. Meanwhile, his successor, Richard Nixon was becoming more involved in the Watergate scandal with each passing day. And he was forfeiting the confidence of the American people with each move he made. The "Saturday night massacre" in which he fired Archibald Cox, Attorney-General Richardson, and his deputy, Ruckelshaus, was almost the last straw.

The "long national nightmare" as Gerald Ford described it, was augmented by the conduct of the Vice President, Spiro T. Agnew. He resigned his office to avoid further prosecution. On December 6, Ford was sworn in to take his place, the first man to enter office under the terms of the 25th Amendment. The trial of the Watergate accused was televised. Each episode was like driving the knife a little deeper into the body politic.

Early in January I went with Leroy Garrett to the Preachers' Workshop at Abilene Christian College. The weather was frightful. A blizzard swept across the land leaving the roads ice-covered and hazardous. Cars were in the ditches the entire route. Plane service was completely cancelled. Despite this 700 men gathered for the event. I spoke on fellowship. Harold Hazelip, of Memphis, Tennessee, and Richard Rogers, of Lubbock, Texas responded. Then I answered questions for the rest of the morning. Due to the importance of the theme and the interest in it, J. D. Thomas had not arranged anything else and we had the full session. It was an interesting time. Some agreed with me. Others were bitterly opposed. It would be interesting to see the reaction if the speech were being made now. Great changes have occurred. The position I advocated is much more widely accepted in these days.

January 31, I went to Kentucky to Murray State College, for meetings with the Murray Christian Fellowship. As I met with the students and answered their questions I was made to appreciate the fact that the fellowship was not limited to those who were of our persuasion. It was open to all who were seeking the answer to the great question of life itself. I met many who had grown up in various religious backgrounds. They were being ministered to according to their needs. The student rebellion was grinding to a halt but there was no adequate substitute for it. Fortunately, those who attended the Bible studies of the fellowship were being pointed to Jesus, and to march for him was the real way to go.

Before I returned home I was scheduled to speak at the Christian Church in Brookport, Illinois. The town was a microcosm of the divisions of the restoration movement. Although it was but a very small Ohio River town, at one time it had three congregations, all meeting within a few blocks of one another. The hostilities and bitterness were bequeathed from one generation to another and the feud perpetuated. The situation is somewhat alleviated now, although there are often internal troubles which beset the groups. I have often wondered what would happen in such a place if there were just one person who ignored all of the divisions and simply recognized everyone who loved Jesus as his brother. This is the way Paul did at Corinth.

The month of February proved to be very busy for me. I spoke for the North Central Regional Camp Conference at Lincoln, Illinois, and went from there to Jacksonville, Florida. I was in the home of Tillman and Ellen Cavert. It was Ellen's father who gave the original money to build Florida Christian College. They feel very strongly that it was diverted from its original course, and they were "sold down the river." If the truth ever becomes apparent it will look bad for the administration. While I was in Jacksonville, some sixty brothers and sisters gathered in the Cavert home where I spoke to them on fellowship.

I went next to Patoka, Illinois, where I addressed a full house on the subject of the Holy Spirit. I addressed the Area Men's Fellowship at Gillespie, Illinois, in one of the great coal mining areas of the state, and concluded the month at Columbus, Illinois, where I spoke on "The Four Dimensional Life." For four nights I emphasized that if Christ dwells in your heart by faith, and you are rooted and grounded in love, "you may have power to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth, and length and height and depth, and to experience the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge." If you have never known this it may be indicative that you are not one of the

saints.

Early in March I went to the Family Life Conference at French Lick, Indiana. Other speakers were Dr. Robert Burns and Dr. Charles Shedd. Dr. Burns was at his inimitable best and the more than 400 persons who had enrolled thoroughly enjoyed him. Dr. Shedd had recently authored the book "The Fat is in Your Head." He had formerly weighed 330 pounds, but now was down to 165, which was just half of his previous avoirdupois. He said he had "shed one Charlie."

In his introduction he told us how he was motivated to write the book. In his younger days he always had to clean up his plate. It was an unpardonable sin to leave any food on it. You always had to eat what you took out even if it made you gag. His mother hovered over him with the threat, "Clean up your plate or you will get no supper." When he got married and his children came along he could not treat them so cruelly. Still he had the neurotic aversion to food left on the plate. So he would take what the children had left, rake it out on his own plate, and eat it. This continued until one day his youngest son looked at his mother and said, "Mama, if we did not have papa we would have to keep a pig, wouldn't we?" On such casual observations hang the writing of many books. It does not take much to trigger a real writer into starting.

The Sixth Annual Missionary Reunion of Mexico was to be held south of Cuernavaca, in Morelos, Mexico. I was invited to address it each evening for three days. It was a fascinating experience for a "gringo" like myself. We stayed in an old, old inn, and the meetings were held in a large room. In the daytime we met in a group under the beautiful trees on the grounds which were fenced in. The furniture was heavy and ponderous, all of it hand-carved by artisans of the past. The water was turned on four hours per day. If you wanted a bath you had to be there. Drinking water was obtainable from huge jugs in the hall.

The waiters spoke only Spanish and I never was quite sure what I would get when I ordered. This resulted in some frantic gestures and waving of the hands. One thing I could admire was their ability to make bread. Each morning there were six to eight different kinds of delicious fresh rolls on the table for breakfast. I could have made a meal of them alone. One day some of the missionaries took me into the native section of Cuernavaca to an ice cream parlor run by a man and his wife. The ice cream was made in flavors I had never seen before— fresh corn, prunes, avocado, mango, and a host of other things too numerous to mention. I got a double dip cone, one dip being guava, and the other banana. It was *delicioso!*

It was interesting to hear some of the problems encountered by missionaries, especially by those who had gone to remote jungle villages, or penetrated into mountainous regions off the beaten track. It was nothing to have chickens scratching around and clucking in the buildings used for meetings, or to find a dog taking a siesta under the Lord's Table. The improvising of various things for enhancement of teaching taxed even the most fertile and inventive minds. I learned a lot about problems on the mission field. I came to appreciate the various moral standards which had developed through the ages. But I still came away with the idea that the chief problems were one's fellow missionaries. If one could learn to put up with them he generally had no trouble with the natives. It was interesting to see the "gung ho" American spirit come up against the "Mañana" attitude of the people. The latter eventually won!

I went directly from the exotic influence of our sister country to the south to my own native town, Flat River, Missouri. It had made great changes but had not yet developed into an asphalt jungle. It was near here I was born. Here I was christened in the Lutheran Church. It was a mere formality because I never remember going back. Here I grew up in childish simplicity. Here I married Nell when I was twenty. It was good to be back home again, although the rough, rude

mining settlement had grown up into a more cultural city.

The boom began just eighteen years before I was born with the sinking of a shaft that uncovered incredibly rich veins of lead ore. The place was tough, the rough and tumble life of the miners centered about the Blue Goose, the Black Bear, the Klondike and Moonlight saloons. When I was a youngster someone was always being killed in a drunken brawl. It was a real pleasure to return and I felt humbled by it all. I was thankful to see the sophistication that had replaced the early days. I spoke at the Lions Club, the Kiwanis Club, to the Rotary and Optimist Clubs. In every instance I held out the hope that is ours in Christ Jesus. When there was time I answered questions. Many of them were pertinent and penetrating.

Soon thereafter I began a tour of western Texas and eastern New Mexico. My real purpose was to expose myself to some of my friends who had never met me, and to meet as many of those who opposed me as possible. I wanted to be vulnerable. I believed in what I was saying. I had confidence in what I was trying to do. Of course, I could not generally speak in church buildings as the sectarian spirit forbade that. In the divided condition of God's family I purposely opted for neutral locations since this would make it possible for all to attend regardless of conscience. I found out that generally the ones who fought my coming most desperately were the preachers. I am convinced that our brethren would have settled their differences years ago had it not been for the fact that they were kept apart by professionals.

At Borger, Texas, I was a guest of David Warren. A group of us met for dinner in an uptown restaurant and talked as fast as possible since time was short. We then adjourned to the lovely home of the Warrens to which people came from all over. The spacious living-room was crowded. We continued our talk until almost midnight. That night I went home with the Hutsons, to Friona, Texas. I spent the next day in the hospitable home of the

senior Hutsons but we were blessed by the coming of their son Leland, and his family, to have luncheon and to spend the day with us. That evening we met in the Hospitality Room at the local bank. It was filled to capacity. I spoke about my growing concept of the fellowship for the whole family of God. It was generally well received. The big thing was to get someone to implement it.

7. The Last Years of Mission Messenger

Specters From the Past at Lexington

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In my last installment I was in Friona, Texas. It is one of the great cattle feeding places in the United States. We visited one of the feeding pens. There were thousands of cattle. Everything was mechanized. The feed was mixed with supplements in a towering silo and fed by augers into the troughs. All the cattle did was to come and eat. It was almost like the church in a lot of places. The herd had nothing to do with selection. They had to take what was supplied. It was put into the trough and they could not question it. They must either eat it or sleep through it.

I went next to Portales, New Mexico, where I was a guest in the home of Frank Poynor, a brother with whom I had corresponded, and whom I had come to love. Our meeting was held in the Conference Room at the City Library. It was my privilege to have a number of young people from the New Mexico State College with us. A goodly number of them had recently left the large Church of Christ in the city and had started to meet to themselves. They had done so because they thought it was essential to protect their freedom from prejudice.

It all started over a Bible study held on campus. The young people were baptizing a number of other students. They obtained permission to use the baptistry at the church building. There was some objection to the dress of some of them. They

wore jeans. They allowed their hair to grow a little longer than the people were accustomed to. They ignored the pews and sat down on the steps to the pulpit and on the floor surrounding the baptistry. They sang choruses. When one was baptized they lifted up their hands to God and praised Him. They hugged the person while he was still dripping wet. The deacon who was taking care of the building and unlocking the door became infuriated. He declared, "Not only did they not sit on the comfortable pews we had provided, but they sat there and sang songs that were not even in our books." So they left and began meeting where they were cemented together and not concretized.

At Lubbock our meeting was held in the Student Center at Texas Tech. It was preceded by a small gathering in the home of Dr. Thomas Langford, dean of the university, and a real man of God. A number of friends dropped in to talk about the progress of reformation. They were overjoyed with what was happening. The meeting at the center brought together a goodly number of readers of *Mission Messenger* in the area, some of them secretly "for fear of the Pharisees." There were also students present from Lubbock Christian College as well as from the local school of preaching. It was quite obvious I was saying some things they did not hear daily. I was "bringing certain strange things to their ears."

The question period was particularly penetrating. One young man asked if I were not afraid that I might be advocating heresy. I replied that I was even more afraid that he would confuse orthodoxy with heresy, and pointed out that it was Erasmus who said, "By identifying the new learning with heresy, you make orthodoxy synonymous with ignorance." I then mentioned that every reformer in history had been branded a heretic by the establishment. Luther, Huss, Calvin, Wesley and even Alexander Campbell. If I were a heretic I was in good company. All of these were hounded and harassed, driven out and persecuted during their lifetimes, and it was only after they had been dead a hundred years that they became heroes.

Anyone who differs with us, who does not parrot the traditional ideas, is regarded as a heretic. We mistake walking in the old paths with wallowing in the old ruts. It is not wrong to dissent. It may be wrong not to do so. The status quo is not sacred. We have to be willing to be reckoned as oddballs rather than to play ball sometimes.

It came to me that the reason these diverse people could come and hear me was because I represented no party or sect. I belonged solely to Jesus. I was continually astounded by the fact that people could grow up in the same community and know nothing about their "other brethren." There were six different groups present at Lubbock. Each of them knew only a certain group of preachers. They read only their own papers. I introduced some who had met in business transactions but did not know each other as Christians. They could hear me with a clear conscience because I no longer represented any of them. I was simply a member of the fellowship of the unashamed. My only creed was Christ, my only law was love. I did not shrink from questions of anyone.

At Ruidoso, New Mexico, the following night, we met in the Luncheon Room at the Chaparral Motel. There were not many of us but it was a thrill to sit down and discuss "kingdom matters" with those who had vowed allegiance to the king. After it was all over we went to the lovely home of Brother Teague and continued talking until it was quite late. I have often wondered about those whom I met. I have heard of none of them during the years that have elapsed. Are they still faithful to the principles about which we talked, or has the lure of the world deflected them from their goal?

After a series at Ferry Road Church of Christ in Waynesville, Ohio, I went to the banquet held in the Student Center ballroom, at the University of Kentucky, in Lexington. I never visit the city without feeling a sense of something bordering upon awe. The cause was established there by Barton

Warren Stone in 1816, with 24 members. It was here, just sixteen years later that the Disciples and Christians united in a meeting which began on New Year's Day and continued four days. On the following Lord's Day they communed together and pledged to each other their cooperation.

It was in Lexington that the debate between Alexander Campbell and N. L. Rice was held. It began at 10 o'clock, Wednesday, November 15, 1843. It lasted fifteen days. Each disputant made 64 speeches. The published account filled a book of 912 pages of closely set type. Mr. Rice proved to be the most difficult opponent Mr. Campbell had met during his whole career.

In 1847 the church in Lexington was the largest in the state. It contained 382 members. It had been beset by trouble over various things from the beginning. From 1864 to 1870 instrumental music became the most bitterly discussed issue in the *Millennial Harbinger* **and in** *Lard's Quarterly*. **Some of its greatest antagonists were in Kentucky. Among these were J. W. McGarvey, Moses E. Lard, and I. B. Grubbs. Brother McGarvey withdrew his membership from the Broadway Church when the instrument was installed. But he never made it a test of fellowship. He still returned to Broadway to preach when invited to do so. He professed a sincere love for all of the brethren there. He was big enough to distinguish between fellowship of God's children and participation in a practice which he could not condone.**

When I visit Lexington it seems that I am in a microcosm of the entire movement. Specters from the past appear to materialize out of the gloom. Heroes of yesterday who "waxed valiant in fight and turned to flight the armies of the aliens" seem to hover about. But gone is the deepseated spiritual dedication combined with intellectualism of the highest sort. What a privilege it would be to sit at the feet of Campbell, Stone and McGarvey. I spoke at the banquet on the topic "The Battle

of the Pea Patch," drawn from II Samuel 23:11, 12.

I went next to Belmont Avenue congregation in Nashville. This was a unique and free congregation. Some had been excommunicated by Churches of Christ in the area because their opinions did not jibe with the establishment. Others had just grown tired and left of their own accord. They were searching for green pastures. They were tired of munching on dried hay. There were jeans-wearing, long-haired kids in the number, but there were also doctors, lawyers, professors and businessmen. All got along well. The only test of fellowship was your relation to Jesus. The service was alive unto and enlivened by the Spirit.

The congregation had a magnificent social consciousness. They supplied food, clothing and furniture to the needy on a daily basis. They had chosen to remain in the old building and it was crowded for every service. There were two meetings held on Wednesday night while I was there. Both of them filled the place to capacity. A lot of students from David Lipscomb College came to hear me. They sat on the floor, on the steps of the pulpit and in the baptistry. Some of them stood patiently in the rear.

People drove long distances to be present. I met young people who were in Nashville, hoping to make good in country or bluegrass music. The service was so unstructured that anyone could come up on the platform, or stand where he was, and tell what Jesus meant to him. Don Finto was generally responsible for the meetings. He had been a teacher at David Lipscomb College but was let out in one of their purges. He was joined by several other professors who were guillotined and who helped to start Belmont. It was a church whose time had come.

Actually the church had been there for many years. The father of Norvel Young was one of the elders. But the church was fading into the background as the community changed. It was dying rapidly. Only a handful of people were attending. Most of them were afraid to return at night. Drugs and

prostitution were all around them in the streets. Stealing and vandalism took their toll. And then renewal set in. Drug users came back from a living death through Jesus. Young prostitutes found a haven of rest in Jesus. In an amazing fellowship which knew no second-class citizens of the kingdom people were baptized unto a living hope. Obviously there were risks. There are always risks where freedom is found and everything is not cut, dried and stacked beforehand. But it was a great thing to be a part of a congregation which had been resurrected from the dead.

It was while I was there that I met the father and mother of Pat Boone. They were gracious, kind and unassuming. We went out to eat together one night so they could tell me their story. They were greatly disturbed when they heard that Pat and Shirley had become wrapped up in the Holy Spirit. They prayed for them every night, asking God to bring them back. They had all been members of the Churches of Christ for years. One night the elder Brother Boone could not sleep, so in the middle of the night he slipped out to read his Bible and pray. While he was praying he became convinced of the presence of the Holy Spirit. He awakened his wife and told her that Pat was right. She arose and prayed and said she experienced the nearness of the Spirit. They were so overjoyed at the discovery that they made the mistake of telling about it next Sunday. Sister Boone was divested of her class which she taught and they were both excommunicated. They were still attending there, however, as they loved those who had treated them so unfairly.

Right after I left Nashville I went for a Talkathon to Missouri University. It lasted about nine hours in all. I began at 1:30 p.m. and closed at 10:30 p.m. Students could come and go as classes or work demanded. The room was always full and some were standing in the hall ready to take the place of those who had to vacate. There was a fifteen minute rest period every two hours. In each segment I spoke for 30 minutes and then answered questions for the remainder of the time. Some of the

questions were very interesting. They were the kind you would expect from students who were part of a great university under the domination of humanistic thinking.

We discussed the relativity of truth and I suggested that in its final analysis truth was a person and not a proposition. Jesus declared that he was the way, the truth and the life. Before a proposition can be stated it has to exist first as a concept in a logical mind. I postulated that all truth had to exist in a divine mind. It was a great session.

7. The Last Years of Mission Messenger

Talking Plainly With Each Other

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The eighth annual unity forum was held July 5-7, 1973, at Tulsa, Oklahoma. Local disciples had worked diligently in promoting it. Brethren were in attendance from 15 states and Canada. The interest was superb. Perry Epler Gresham, former president of Bethany College, and an authority on Alexander Campbell, spoke the same night as I did. His style was inimitable. Although he was on the board of huge corporations, his speech was given in a kind of down-home, "cracker barrel style" which made him appear as a country philosopher.

I told a simple story about an early incident in my life, in which I reacted adversely against my brother because I became unsettled as to whose child I really was. It was a homely little piece which hardly deserved a hearing in such august circumstances. Yet it seemed to impress the audience in a manner which some of my more profound reasoning failed to do. I have wondered a lot of times since that night, if it might not be the case that we are divided purely because of our lack of ability to talk plainly and simply. Only recently I had a letter from a college professor who said he was searching one night for something he could use to illustrate what fellowship was all about. He came across the article in *Mission*, and read it to his class. I have never been able to write another article of that kind, yet I wrote that one in one sitting. Apparently it dipped the well of communications dry.

I was impressed with the fact that few of the local members of the churches of Christ attended. I was told that they were warned not to come. Most of those who were present were "freedom fighters" who had struggled with the dogmatism and sterile orthodoxy of the institution and had wrenched themselves free. It was not yet time for people in general to get their eyes opened to the fact that they were being held as hostages to a System. That would come later. A goodly number of those who did come were self-styled "charismatics." I deplored the brand as a separatist title. It always appeared to me as being divisive in its very nature. Everyone who has a gift from God is charismatic, and that includes all. Among those who came was Ben Franklin, who was later to hold a debate with Guy N. Woods. The debate did but little good. It settled nothing. But the unity group at Tulsa was significant in that it brought together a group of saints who might not otherwise have met. They learned to listen to one another despite wide divergencies in their views.

Later, I went to the Lake Springfield Christian Assembly at Springfield, Illinois, to address a group of men. The camp was beautifully situated commanding a view of part of the lake. The brethren used it as a youth camp during the summer, and when September came, they availed themselves of the opportunity of getting together to talk over their problems and recount their victories. Generally they sought for speakers of reputation who could share with them new insights into the Word. I think that such gatherings are reminiscent of the pioneer culture of which we partook in our early years. People on the frontier felt an urge to come together to reinforce the faith, and to listen to a rehearsal of "those things most surely believed among us." It is a great loss that it becomes ever more difficult to get people to come to such meetings.

From there I went down to Cabool, Missouri in the Ozarks. It was an interesting place. It was a center of small farms from which came some of the 60,000 pounds of poultry per month, and the hundreds of cases of eggs shipped out every

week. The Ozarks farmer does not try to conquer the wilderness. Instead, he makes friends with it. He is generally concerned with small plots of it that he can use for pasture and orchard. But chickens and eggs bring in the regular income. As the farmers say, "You can't rightly tell about fruit. Frost or blight is apt to get it. But not a hen. A hen works right on, rain or shine." Besides, the women can generally look after the chickens.

The congregation, like so many others in small areas, had been through some traumatic experiences. I sought to help them as much as I could. I was fortunate to have with me a dear brother and sister from Astoria, Illinois, Mr. and Mrs. Evan Price. Those who wished to do so gathered at a little restaurant daily and we talked and ate together, speaking quietly and meditatively together of our relationship to God through His marvelous grace.

I went next to Columbus, Indiana, where there are six thousand people who claim allegiance to Christ in the restoration movement. They are divided into several large congregations. I went to New Hope, which is just a short distance outside the city. The congregation dates way back in history. Immediately behind the meeting-house is an old cemetery, the markers of which indicate burials of many decades past. Daily I strolled through this hallowed spot where "the rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep." The congregation is ably served by my good brother, Mat Malott. It was once primarily a gathering-place of rural people. Now it is growing in membership and is composed of many from the city as well as from nearby towns.

At Fairborn, Ohio a pleasant surprise awaited. The crowds were so large as to necessitate extra chairs in the aisles at night. The day sessions, which were open forums, brought in more than sixty persons. The questions were of special interest. The answers were eagerly received. It was in these daytime sessions that the greatest good was accomplished. One thing which

impressed me was the similarity of the questions. Whether it was in a Christian Church or Church of Christ, whether in the city or in a rural setting, the same things troubled the people.

November 5, I went to Terre Haute, Indiana, at the invitation of the campus ministry, to deliver three addresses in a hall on the campus of the State University. It was a delightful occasion. I met with the Christian students early in the morning for prayer and Bible Study before the sun was up. An excellent audience was present each night, with brethren coming from far and near to be a part of the encounter. It was during this time I learned a great deal about Elton Trueblood and the "Yokefellow Movement" which he began. I was not too far from Richmond, Indiana. Trueblood credits C. S. Lewis with his conversion from a liberal theologian to a Christ-centered believer. In his autobiography he writes, "C. S. Lewis reached me primarily because he turned the intellectual tables."

It was about this time that a new journalistic enterprise began. It was devoted primarily to reaching Disciples of Christ, Independent Christian Churches, and Churches of Christ. It had three consulting editors, one drawn from each segment. It was aptly and significantly titled "Fellowship." Several issues were printed and they contained some meaty articles. But it never really got off the ground. I have often wondered why. I have come to the conclusion that it was because it represented the dream of a top echelon of men. No movement has ever marched which did not begin at the grass-roots level. A great many lesser, and much inferior, papers are being published in our day. And "Fellowship" seems to have been needed so much.

At Indiana University, Stanley McDaniel, who was a professor at College of the Redwoods in California, when we first met, made application to do his doctoral theme on "The Life and Preaching of W. Carl Ketcherside." Permission was granted and Stanley, who now teaches at Johnson Bible College, began collecting my materials. He did not neglect any source. The

result is that he accumulated the largest body of my writings of anyone on earth. He listened to numerous tapes, besides reading every book and paper to which I had contributed. Finally, after several years he completed his thesis. I appreciate what he said, but I still wonder why the university agreed to allow it to be written about such an obscure personage.

I went next to address the annual banquet of the Eastern Lakeland Christian Campus Ministry at Charleston, Illinois. I felt while I was there that it was one of the most effective and best conducted of any such work I had seen. The students seemed to be gung-ho for Jesus. They were not Christians and students, but Christians who were students. There is a difference. The first think of their student life as separate from their Christian commitment; the second see it as merely a part of it. In my talk I sought to recapture for all their mission. They were "secret agents" for another kingdom. They were on enemy territory and in an alien land. They had been dropped behind the lines as commandos for Christ. They were on a search and rescue mission. They were members of the heavenly Central Intelligence Agency. Their allegiance was not to the school first but to their absent King. Someday He would return and rescue them from the asphalt jungle.

A short time before, the Humanist Society issued Humanist Manifesto Number Two. It was anything but complicated. It was a plain declaration of war against everything which I hold dear. It called for a freeing of the American mind from what it called the fear and dread of the supernatural. and predicted that by the year 2000, all forms of superstition and religion would pass from the scene. It was a calculated flinging down of the gauntlet in the face of those who believed that Jesus was the Son of God.

It was signed by a host of men and women who were regarded as the most erudite in our land. They were the instructors of thousands of our youth. Among them were a couple of professors at Indiana University. Recognizing the

grave danger of raw humanism being dumped like raw sewage into the clear streams of thought, and realizing that it had already infiltrated our whole life structure, I welcomed the opportunity to appear on the campus of Indiana University at Bloomington, to discuss openly the implications of the manifesto.

I carefully studied the whole question until I was thoroughly conversant with its appeal to the modern scientific and technological mind. I became convinced that the inclination to place all things in the realm of relativity had laid the foundation of the theory in its modern form. So I sat down and worked out my presentation on a three-prong basis. (1) Where I agreed with humanism; (2) Where I disagreed with humanism; (3) My personal apology, in which I set forth the reasons for believing that the faith for which I make my plea is far superior to humanism. I gave a five point breakdown in developing the last. It was a privilege to be on a modern campus and to be brought into contact with some of the brilliant minds to be found there. Yet it was tragic to see how far the school had drifted since the days when David Starr Jordan was president of the institution.

I closed the year with the brethren at Washington, Illinois. They had invited me to come and speak on the theme, "Meeting Problems of Today's Youth." It was one of my favorite subjects and I was quick to accept the invitation. Reconstructing the year in my memory, it appeared to be one in which God had been rich in His abundant mercies. I had traveled all over the United States without undue incident. I had engaged in all kinds of encounters and had come out relatively unscathed. It was a great feeling to be used of God in so many different ways and for so many things. I faced the coming year with confidence in the divine mercy and compassion.

As 1834 drew to a close, Alexander Campbell wrote in *Millennial Harbinger***, "We expect and hope to travel more than usual during the ensuing year, the Lord willing. On deciding the**

rival claims of numerous sections, we incline not to be arbitrary, and have nearly adopted this resolution— to be governed by the number of readers we have in various places, our experience hitherto proving that we can be most useful in those regions, because there is something to work upon in the minds of such communities." That said it for me also.

7. The Last Years of Mission Messenger

Jungle Fellowship

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With the beginning of 1974 I knew that we had but two more years to edit the paper. We had resolved to discontinue *Mission Messenger* with the December issue of 1975. It had been a part of our lives for thirty-seven years. And it would be difficult to bid it farewell. There was never a time in all of those years that we were not conscious of it. We ate with the paper during the day and slept with it at night. We calculated time from one issue until the coming of the next.

For a long time I had been wanting to do a series of articles on pure speech. I was motivated in the desire by a statement of Alexander Campbell in his "Synopsis of Reformation." I could see that this was of prime importance. Accordingly, I commenced to write on the general theme. I started with a quotation from Joseph Addison in the British journal called *The Spectator*, which was born on March 1, 1711. I closed with the statement, "I want to be with all who are saved, and I expect to be. I care not one thing for any partisan flag over an exclusivistic rampart. My hope is in Christ Jesus. I began in the Spirit and I have no intention of trying to be made perfect in the flesh." The writings for 1974 were all gathered into a book called "Pure Speech."

It was our custom to bind about 2250 of the books each year. They have long since been sold, and seem to be even more

popular now that they are out of print. It is my hope that they may continue to bear the message when I leave for worlds unknown.

My first trip in 1974 was one of great interest to me. For a number of years, missionaries from Independent Christian Churches had labored in Brazil. They had planted congregations in Brasilia, and at various other points throughout that great land. In more recent times Churches of Christ began to send in workers who tended to congregate in Sao Paulo, and to work out from there. Each of these with a common restoration heritage met for a combined conference. One year one group brought in a speaker, the following year the other group had the privilege of doing so. For several years the Christian Church brethren had been asking for the privilege of having me come. Each time they were told not to do so. I was dangerous; it was not time to have me yet. My thinking was too advanced to risk having me.

Finally, the brethren decided they were going to have me whether it was approved or not. The others said that if I came they were going to ask someone to come also. They selected Reuel Lemmons, editor of the *Firm Foundation*. We had never really been together, although both of us knew we should meet if possible. We had tried to do so once or twice without success. Brother Lemmons had been provoked into making an attack upon my position in his paper. I replied and three articles from each of us had appeared in both journals. He had written one entitled "Blind in One Eye," and I had also answered it. I had tried several times to get articles published in the *Firm Foundation*. Each time they were returned with a curt note saying that I was not welcome to write.

Realizing the influence of this fellow-editor I was anxious to meet him and to be with him. The circumstances were ideal. The camp, which had been rented from the Presbyterians, was carved out of the jungle. There was a kitchen and dining room at one end, and a circle of cabins, with a large assembly-hall at the

other end. Brother Lemmons and I stayed in a very small unit together. In our bedroom we could reach out and touch each other from the bunks.

I learned a great deal about my companion while we were together. I am not sure he was as comfortable with the brethren from the Christian Churches as I was. But he was formally polite to all and gave no offense. He was brought there to do a job, and he did it, and that was it. I found him to be a mellifluous orator of the old school. Some of his presentations rivaled the best of William Jennings Bryan, "the golden voice of the Platte." This was especially true of the early morning devotionals in which we took turns speaking on one of the psalms. Since our visit I have had a longing to talk at length with Brother Lemmons about the community of saints in which we both share. There is no justifiable reason for us being apart. Certainly there is none for us appearing as enemies.

It would require too much space for me to describe all that took place in the jungle vastness, and I shall desist. It became apparent to me that the men who work there must find a solution to their problems or perpetuate among humble people a division which grew up on the frontiers of America. It is incredible that those who believe in the same Jesus, who worship the same God, who read the same Bible and sing the same songs, should project an image of alien churches upon the native minds. I worked with the young people, boys and girls who were children of the missionaries. Some of them came from remote Indian villages in the jungles of the Amazon. They were schooled by their mothers. We had a great time together.

I flew back to Saint Louis from Rio de Janeiro, in a frightful blizzard. We were bandied back and forth between airports where we were not permitted to land. We were flown to Dulles and not permitted to leave the plane. Finally we were cleared for landing at Kennedy in New York. I finally arrived in Saint Louis, having been for almost twenty-four hours without

food. The next morning Nell suffered a blackout and fell with a thud in the bathroom. When I reached her I thought she was dying, from the look in her eyes. I called an ambulance and she was in the emergency room all day. They never determined the cause of the blackout, but she was in frightful pain for the ten days she stayed in the hospital, and had to be cared for when she returned home. I was glad that the providence of God brought me home when I was most needed.

It was about a month later I was scheduled to speak three times and conduct a workshop at the Christian Writers' Clinic, held at Holiday Inn North, in Cincinnati. It was a rich experience for me. The clinic was conducted by Standard Publishing. The editors of their various publications were all present, giving advice and sharing experiences with budding journalists. I have since met people all over the United States who have told me they met me there. They have expressed themselves as being appreciative of the encouragement they received. Some of them have since blossomed into authors and have brought me copies of their books. I never had the opportunity to attend such a school as I was growing up. I simply started writing down the thoughts which came to me in my moments of meditation. I never thought I would be an editor this long.

On March 7-9 I was in Kingsport, Tennessee. I stayed in the congenial home of Max E. Smith. We had a full schedule of meetings. I spoke three nights, conducted forums each morning, spoke at two luncheons, delivered three radio addresses and made two thirty minute television appearances. It was a blessing to me to be able to enjoy the hospitality of such a gracious home and the fellowship of such a fine band of disciples as I found there. I have often thought about how the sectarian spirit cheated me in not allowing me to know so many whom God loved and whom I also found it easy to love.

I was scheduled to be in Xenia, Ohio, April 3-5, and as I

was flying into an airport some twenty miles away, I noticed the pilot was having a difficult time landing the plane. We were being buffeted by heavy winds. The sky outside was almost as black as night. When we got to the home of Bro. and Sister Jones where I was to stay, we learned that Xenia had experienced a frightful tornado and many homes, schools and churches had been wiped out. We hurried to the meetinghouse to find it had been turned into a rescue station. People came straggling in, dripping from the torrential rain which had followed the storm.

Some of the members had lost their homes. Included among them was Brother Isaac Flora, the minister. Many of those who came to the church building still had loved ones missing, in some cases buried in the debris. The women warmed up the chili which had been prepared for our lunch the next day. Coffee was made and thankfully received. Everyone had a tale to tell about how the storm swept in leaving devastation in its path. There were those who could not talk. The uncertainty numbed them. The tornado was one of scores which had harassed the country on that frightful day. Our meeting was cancelled and the city began the monumental task of cleaning away the rubble in preparation for rebuilding. It was a tragic thing.

I went next to Los Angeles to make a special film with the Vernon Brothers. It was made at Warner Studios. They had been making "Homestead, U.S.A." which featured their birthplace and home in the Ozarks. It was a successful presentation. The four brothers formed a real quartet. All of them had married wives who were singers and who had a quartet of their own. Then the children followed in the footsteps of the parents, and they could form almost any kind of combination of voices. They did an excellent job of sending forth the message on wings of song. Best of all, they did not strive to make it by their distinctiveness. They just got up and sang their heads off, and that was distinctive enough in our day. Besides that, all four of the boys were preachers and they could exhort and encourage their listeners to be faithful.

You will recall that it was the Vernon Brothers who led singing for me and did special numbers years before, when I was at Lakewood, California where Ernest Beam was serving when he died. I was there at the invitation of his successor, the inimitable William Jessup, who will never receive enough honor in this world to repay his noble efforts in behalf of the unity of the believers. It was great to be reunited with the brothers again. We used the old Roy Rogers set and present on the program with us was Dale Evans (Rogers), his wife. I was able to talk with her frequently during the long day of filming and I came to admire her a great deal. She told me of their desire to have children and how they had adopted so many of all races.

The night before I had spoken at Westchester to a full house. It was served by one of my favorite people on earth, Harold Thomas. He succeeded Bill Banowsky, who had resigned to become president of Pepperdine University. Harold had been a real pioneer, a trailblazer in the northeast, especially in Maine. He and his good wife were great souls, addicted to the kingdom, willing to make themselves vulnerable for the sake of Jesus. In the same congregation was Harry Robert Fox, Sr., who, with his family had spent so many years in Japan, beloved by the native peoples. I already knew Harry Robert, Jr., and Logan, both of whom were possessed of a fabulous knowledge of the Word. It was a rare privilege to see their revered father.

On May 9, I delivered the baccalaureate address for the graduating class at Cincinnati Bible Seminary, and the next week was in a meeting at Amarillo, Texas. It was my first time to actually conduct a series for brethren who had always opposed the Sunday School. Some of the brethren were a little skeptical of my coming. The preacher was David Sullins, a unique and precious brother. I stayed in his home. Dave had been in Germany during the war, charged with the repair of the motor vehicles for a contingent of motorized cavalry stationed near Berchtesgaden, the mountain retreat of Adolf Hitler, about ten miles from Salzburg. He had fallen in love with an attractive

German girl and they married. It was fun attempting to "sprechen sie Deutsch" with her, especially since I only remembered from my childhood, the little warning taught all children:

Messer, glauber, schare, und licht,

Ist for kleine kinder nicht.

But we had a great meeting and talked about what God expected of all of us in this age. I went back once again for another meeting and found the brethren able to work across the lines with those who did not agree with them.

7. The Last Years of Mission Messenger

People and Places

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One of the outstanding gatherings of men in the United States is the Cavalier Men's Retreat in Virginia. I have now spoken there three times. When I went in 1974 it was held at Oak Hill Christian Assembly grounds, just outside of Richmond. Now it meets some seventy miles away, near the little village of Yale. There were 460 men present the first time I was there. Now it consistently attracts more than 500. Campers are parked all over the hillside and tents pitched throughout the pines. It is a strictly "come as you are event" and no one dresses up for it. The music is under the direction of "The Gospel Lads," who direct audience participation as well as render specials. Those who attend go back home refreshed in spirit, and ready to try and remove mountains for the Master. It is truly an inspirational something.

I flew next to Saskatoon, where brethren met me and took me way south to Macrorie. Here it is that a kind of wilderness camp has been carved out by the brethren. Room has been made in a deep valley for the pitching of tents and the parking of camping vehicles. A tractor stands by to snake the cars out in case of rain. Brethren come from all over Canada and part of the United States. All eat breakfast together. At noon camp stoves and campfires are going all over the place as every family prepares for itself. There are meetings in the morning and evening, the latter generally around a fire which is needed

occasionally when the sun goes down. The pace of life is slow and relaxing with the afternoon given over to games in which anyone may feel free to participate.

During the light refreshment period at night, choruses are sung over the dying embers. The young people are exceptionally good singers, and the wooded hills resound to the sound of their voices. Cecil Bailey, from Winnipeg, Manitoba, and Harold Fox, from Malta, Montana, were the other two speakers. I was endeared to them by their seriousness of purpose and their love for the Word of God. I spoke analytically on the Ephesian Letter. It was hard to bid each other goodbye when the time of separation arrived.

I had to hurry back to the states in order to get to the School of the Ministry, an annual feature conducted at Milligan College in Tennessee. Milligan is a famous school because of its origin and its setting. It is one of the loveliest places in the world. I joined Knofel Staton, Mildred Phillips and Olin Hays on the program. The entire Vernon family was present and regularly provided us with superb music. I came to believe that Knofel Staton was one of the most capable men in the restoration movement in our day. Young and vigorous, he was also filled with knowledge. He talked about marriage and I thought I had never heard another series to equal it. Sister Phillips was excellent in her presentation of personalities she had known in the restoration movement. She is the daughter of the late P. H. Welshimer of Canton, Ohio, whose name has already become legendary. Brother Hays was also in his usual excellent form. It provided a good time for all.

It was about this time I learned that in England, Carlton Melling, who had been gradually losing his sight, resigned as editor of the *Scripture Standard***. He was succeeded by the efficient James Gardiner of Edinburgh. The paper was once under the editorship of Walter Crosthwaite, so during my lifetime had been blessed by three dedicated men, capable and**

scholarly. It was good to realize that it had been entrusted to good hands.

The war had made a greater impact upon the British brethren than they had at first realized. Those who lived in Scotland, England and Wales, were all pacifists. During my two trips among them I found only two men who believed it was right for a Christian to bear arms in defense of his country. During World War I they had suffered indescribable physical torture because of their conscience on the matter. They had been thrown into prison and starved on bread and water. Some of them always bore the marks of their suffering.

But World War II brought among them a different breed, men from the United States, some of them in uniform, some of them conscientious objectors, but who tried never to allow anything to interfere with their devotion to the Lord. These men, and some of their contemporaries, went back to Europe after the hostilities had ceased, taking with them American ideas and methods of evangelism. In Italy, Finland, Germany, France, the Netherlands, and even behind the Iron Curtain, as well as in England, they planted congregations of believers. Neither group was as tolerant of the other as they might have been. Challenges were issued to debate, and to all intents and purposes, a divided group of believers was the result. At present it appears that both sides continue in a kind of suspended animation, watching each other, talking about each other, but seldom talking to one another. A new paper has been started, and there has been a sad polarization.

September 13, 14 I went to the Men's Retreat at Round Lake Christian Assembly, in Ohio. There were 601 men registered for the occasion. Don DeWelt was the other speaker, and he did a masterful job. Many years ago, when we first began to try and bring some degree of understanding and tolerance into an area where hostility had always raged, Leroy Garrett and I met with Don and Seth Wilson at Nowata, Oklahoma, in

an epoch-making forum which was conducted openly and fairly. My brother Paul presided over it. At the time I came to have a deep appreciation for the men whose position we opposed. We have grown closer together through the years.

Don has taught at Ozark Bible College for years. He has always been an advocate of intense evangelism coupled with nurture in the Word. He has published a whole series of books devoted to helping men understand and teach the Word of God. One of his most noted accomplishments was that of bringing back the entire set of Campbell's Harbinger. His latest feat has been the returning to print of the periodicals by Walter Scott, with "The Voice of the Golden Oracle" as the final volume. I consider it one of the greatest volumes I have ever read. Don's method of public presentation is unique. One of the blessings of it comes from his ability to carry on a conversation with himself. It was a great blessing to me to be associated with him. The men all loved him!

Four days later I went to Hanover, New Mexico. To get there, it was necessary to fly to Albuquerque, and take a small commuter plane which flew by way of Truth or Consequences. We landed at Silver City, which was founded in 1870 to mine the gold and silver ores in the foothills of the Mogollon Mountains. Although the supply of these precious metals is about exhausted, copper mining has displaced the work of digging them out. It is thriving. The little town of Hanover lies in sight of a copper mine. The handful of saints meeting there were precious in their faith. The sisters brought lunch and we ate together at noon and again at night after the meetings. The Mexican-flavored food was super. We lingered on in the company of each other, unwilling to break the magic spell of fellowship which engulfed us all in its embrace.

Al Botts, who had been successful in forging a career in the Far West, had returned to Silver City, where he was engaged in his trade, while preaching for the little band of saints. He was

not caught in the sectarian noose at all, and extended the love of Christ to all who deserved it. I was refreshed greatly by the simplicity of life in this remote village which was literally "the end of the trail." Ghost towns and abandoned mining villages dot the mountains. Owls fly in and out of deserted houses. Coyotes make their dens under the ruins of old taverns which once echoed to raucous laughter. But there is nothing ghostly about the fellowship of the saints. It is genuine.

The following month I went to Solsberry, Indiana, where James Root ministered. He had been a successful newspaper editor, but an inner gnawing had driven him to become a preacher of the Word. So he left the desk and went out "not knowing wither he went." He was never able to divorce himself completely from his former vocation. One who has smelled printer's ink never is. So he continued to report the news and do book reviews for the paper, but his work for Christ became very challenging and satisfying. Fortunately, he was not caught up in a lot of the political strivings which seem to be part of the religious establishment. So he and the little band of saints were making progress. This was evidenced in the capacity crowds which attended the meetings. The house was filled every night.

It was while I was there that I came to realize the urbanization of our culture and the words of Jacques Ellul struck me with full force. He said, "We are in the city even when we are in the country for today the country (and soon this will be true of the immense Asian steppe) is only an annex of the city." Solsberry had once been a quiet Hoosier village. The old country store was still there. It stocked everything from horse collars to kerosene lamps. You could still buy an ice cream cone for a nickel. There was a bench behind the stove where "the spit and argue club used to meet." But times had changed. The village was now the bedroom of the city. Every morning people arose from their sleep and headed for the city to work. Some of them were on split shifts. Times had changed and were still changing before our very eyes.

My next work was in Saint Louis, Michigan, where a congregation was thriving under the direction of Henry MacAdams. We had been together years before near South Bend, Indiana. It was good to see him again. He was loved by the people and respected in the community. I was pleased to see brethren from several wings of the non-instrument group come. Some of them were ill at ease at first, walking gingerly as if treading upon forbidden ground. But they were soon listening quite calmly and were resigned to the fact of where they were.

I went next to Beaverton, Oregon. Donald S. Cox was the minister, and I had the great privilege of staying in his wonderful home. Don is man intent upon following God's leading as he understands it. He has a tremendous grasp of the sacred scriptures and a sense of the relevance of the good news to our present age. He is an excellent administrator, but seeks to lead the flock gently home. It was a tremendous blessing to be associated with him.

On August 9, Richard M. Nixon became the first president of these United States to resign from office. The day before he had made his farewell address to the nation admitting only to poor judgment. I had defended him until a few days before. When I became convinced that he was no longer speaking the truth I could not speak up for him. I was greatly disappointed. It seems incredible that a man who had held religious services in the White House could deceive the people of our land. But I was glad when the Watergate ordeal was over and Gerald Ford took office. I think he made a grave error in political judgment when, on September 8, he announced that he had unconditionally pardoned his predecessor for all crimes against the United States he "has committed or may have committed." I do not think the public was ready for this and I do not think his reasons for doing it were all that logical.

It was December 19 before both Houses of Congress gave a majority vote of approval to Nelson Rockefeller as vice

president. This came only after a lengthy and full investigation of the sources and use of his colossal wealth. For the first time the country had an unelected President and Vice President. Meanwhile two famous show personalities died after years on radio and television. Ed Sullivan passed away in New York on October 13, and Jack Benny died in Beverly Hills, California on December 26. The first was 73, the second was 80 years of age.

Change and decay were upon every hand. The small and the great were all subject to it. But it was a blessing to be in one whom it could not affect. It was with faith in Him I began what was to be the final year of publication of the *Mission Messenger***.**

7. The Last Years of Mission Messenger

Diverse Ministries

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Before I get too far from it, I must tell you about the Thanksgiving Workshop of Evangelicals for Social Action, in which I was invited to participate as a delegate. It was held in the Downtown Y.M.C.A. in Chicago and lasted for three days. There were two men from the independent Christian Churches and one other from the Churches of Christ, Vic Hunter, who had been editor of *Mission* but had just resigned. It was interesting to listen to those who had been invited to speak in behalf of various groups, blacks, Orientals, and Hispanic. Some of the most fervent oratory was poured forth in behalf of a majority group in our society— women!

Among those who impressed me most were Paul Rees, Tong Gaw, and Carl F. H. Henry. The latter delivered one of the finest speeches I had ever heard. Leaving all theory aside he went straight to the Bible, and made it come alive. He seemed to be a master of the art of exposition. He developed the parable of the injured man on the road to Jericho in a truly new and exciting way. I liked the calm fashion in which he reacted to the questions and feedback which grew out of his speech. He was firm without being stubborn, practical without being pushy.

In looking back now upon the year I am describing, I find another thing which brought great satisfaction to Nell and me. I had made it a practice, when I sold enough books to pay for the

printing, to start giving the remainder away to college students absolutely free. We even paid the cost of wrapping and postage. In seven years we gave away over 4200 volumes. The postage alone was a little more than fifteen hundred dollars. No one who wrote was turned down provided he personally requested the book. We refused to send them to young people at the request of preachers or parents. We did not want those who received them to feel obligated to read them. We did not propose to thrust anything down unwilling gullets. The books went to every continent. We mailed them to Cambridge, Oxford, the University of Leeds, and various other schools in England. We sent them to universities in Lebanon, Egypt, Taiwan, Amsterdam, Germany and South Africa. It was a real joy to get letters with odd-looking stamps and quaint handwriting asking for one of the books. It helped to show the circulation range of our little paper.

We were not even launched into the New Year when I received word of the death of longtime friends. M. S. Whitehead, one of the original students at the old Alabama Christian College, when G. A. Dunn was president, and the college was located at Berry, many years ago. We had become real friends. Harry Robert Fox, Sr., the gentle missionary who planted the cause so firmly in Japan, and who finally retired to Inglewood, California. He wrote me such encouraging and stimulating letters, never complaining about his own increasing age and infirmities. Elizabeth Vermilion, of Riverside, California. I used to stay at their house in Springfield, Missouri, when I was known as "the boy preacher." I played with her sons until they had to summon me into the house to get ready for evening meetings. John Hasty, the dyed-in-the-wool Republican of Nixa, Missouri. He lived to the age of 94, always kind and considerate of others. These all died in the faith, having seen the promises and embraced them afar off.

I returned to Westchester, California, the second week of the New Year. The meeting was kind of outstanding. Each night

a different group sang. One night the whole Pepperdine University Chorus was there. Another night, the black choir from Figueroa Boulevard Church of Christ was present. A children's group from a day school was present one night, and still another group from Westchester. These all harmonized a half hour before the preaching began. Every night there were people present from 36 to 53 congregations. It was like old home week. Harold Thomas presided over the meetings. Those of you who have heard him know what an outstanding job he does. I spoke one day for the Southern California Christian ministers, and another for the faculty meeting at Pepperdine.

I went from there to Macomb, Illinois, to visit the campus work which was being carried on under the versatile and capable direction of John Derry at Western Illinois University. This was the thing I liked to do best. It was a real thrill to engage in a dialogue session with young people of college age. Their questions were not stereotyped. They were new, fresh and vibrant. And they demanded answers to the problems of life. A good many students seemed jaded, tired and fed up with the daily routine. I noticed that those who had come to know Jesus did not seem to fit into the groove chopped out for the "average student." Generally, they were a cut above, having added a spiritual dimension to life. And John was doing a good job in helping them to take full advantage of their new perspective.

I found a relatively small non-instrumental congregation in Macomb. Several of the members were connected with the college in the role of instructors. I sought to get them to begin clearing the ground for accomplishing some things together with brethren in the Christian Church. Their common historical roots could nourish them both. One thing I recommended was that they take turns holding their midweek Bible studies together. To me, it seemed a shame to have a mere handful of people studying in each place when they could combine for one night a week with no compromise of convictions.

The first of February found me at the World Convention of Missions at Grand Junction, Colorado. It was sponsored by Intermountain Christian College. Both the college and the convention were the fruition of the dream of Erskine Scates, the president of the school. Always an ardent advocate of sharing the Good News with the poverty-stricken people of the universe, he arranged the annual convention to inform and alert the inhabitants of the fertile Colorado Valley of the needs of the regions beyond. He has now departed to be with Jesus but he has left his sons to put wings to his words and feet to his prayers.

I had been in correspondence with Al B. Nelson, a long-time instructor at Texas A&M University, at College Station, about coming to Bryan, Texas. We had agreed upon February 19-21 as the date. The little Christian Church there had been beset by difficulties of one kind and another, and it was a pleasure to go and proclaim the good news of peace. I was agreeably surprised to see a goodly number of brethren from the Churches of Christ present, and although they tended not to agree upon some of my answers to certain questions, that was to be expected. I tried never to trim my response to please the querist, but to answer in such a manner that I would be willing to give an account if it was the last thing I ever said. I was also perfectly content to do as Martin Luther said, "Give men time." We did not arrive at our present state in one day, nor would we get out of our predicament by sunset.

I made my home with Brother and Sister Nelson, and it was a lovely and quiet place. As we breakfasted together I could look out on the rear courtyard where Sister Nelson kept the birds well supplied with an "avian smorgasbord." Some of them were so tame and had been regular customers for so long they would go up on the windowsill and watch us as we ate. Brother Nelson and I wasted no time. It was a literary blessing for me to be with one who knew Texas so well, and we talked about two realms— heaven and the Lone Star State— without stopping.

I went next to Lake Wales, Florida, for the Lake Aurora Christian Assembly meeting. Brethren reported later that it was the largest in attendance of any Men's Retreat they had ever held. I spoke three times and held open forums for questions twice. The questions were especially good. The men had gravitated to Florida from every part of the north. They brought with them the sectional bias of each area, and they wanted to know the truth about their views. I pointed out that every movement begun by men to unite the believers inevitably passes through the same sequence— charity, innovation, debate, division, sectarianism, and charity again. This starts the whole process over. We are just now emerging from our period of hibernation in the deep freeze of sectarianism. It is difficult for us to be charitable. We are afraid of going too far, of denying what our parents fought to achieve. But our parents were not perfect and a lot of things which they willed us are questionable. We need not fear being lost at sea as long as we cling to the Rock. Jesus Christ is Lord. If we steer by Him instead of by history we will be safe.

At Lexington, Ohio, I was scheduled to speak on three themes which were particularly relevant to our times: "Do Demons Inhabit the Bodies of Men Today?"; "Can the Planets Decide Our Fate?"; and "Resurrection and the Life Beyond." These were on everyone's mind because of "The Exorcist." The house was filled for every service and more than a hundred gathered for the question periods each day. It was a real blessing to be associated with such generous, warmhearted saints, and I thrilled to their companionship in the Lord Jesus.

I had been issued an invitation to speak at the International Convention of Christian Endeavor which was to be held at Portland. More than a thousand persons were in attendance. After I addressed the entire group they split into two equal sections and I met with about 500 of them to answer questions about the faith in Christ Jesus. There were a good many delegates from foreign countries. As a result of speaking

for the gathering I have three times been invited to address the Easter Sunrise Service which they sponsor in one of the most beautiful parks in Saint Louis. It attracts some 2500 persons.

I went next to Bloomington, Minnesota where I spoke to the congregation of which Robert Cash is the able minister. Fortunately, it was far enough to the north that the party spirit did not prevail with the same bitterness and intensity in which it is found farther to the south. As a result we had in attendance a great number of Church of Christ brethren. This always makes the question forums of particular interest. Both sides tend to ask about things of which the others have not the faintest inkling of knowledge. Because of their long years of isolation and insulation, both have accepted their own distinctives.

April 23-25 found me at the Colony Heights congregation in Fort Wayne, Indiana, with George L. Shull. It had been a long time since I had been in Fort Wayne. I had made three trips there previously. I found a town which had known the impact of change. The men who had been laboring there when I had originally visited were all gone. But Jesus was there alive and well. It was interesting to see how He could adapt to various circumstances and conditions, and influence them.

Less than two weeks later I was in Lansing, Michigan, for the State Christian Convention. This made it possible for me to meet a great many good friends I had made through the years. Michigan was always very interesting to me. It was in Detroit that Brother Malcolmson, an elder who had come over from Scotland to become wealthy in the coal importing business, had staked Henry Ford to his first $50,000 when Ford was beginning to experiment with his motor vehicle. Ford used to attend services with him. Legend has it that he immersed Ford. They had no preacher for they were staunch believers in mutual ministry. Malcolmson spoke on the theme once at the Abilene Christian College lectureship. It was a masterful address.

In 1856, Isaac Errett left Warren, Ohio, with a group interested in the lumber business. He had to travel by stage from Detroit far back into the timber country. The business failed and Errett started planting churches instead of cutting down trees. He brought about 1000 new members into the body before leaving for Cleveland to edit the *Christian Standard*. Before he left he was under fire for a sign on his door which read "Rev." Isaac Errett. He was the first man in the Restoration Movement to adopt a title. I went to Michigan with a lot of history behind me. I tried to make a little while I was there.

7. The Last Years of Mission Messenger

The Wonders of Koinonia

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As the time drew near for the announced demise of *Mission Messenger*, we were besieged by offers to take it over and continue it. A good many of these offered to continue it in the manner to which it had been accustomed. I steadfastly refused all of these. It was my contention that no one else could edit the paper as I had done. Thirty-seven years of trial and error had stamped it with the impress of my personality and thought. It was a baby which Nell and I had conceived and to which we had given birth. It was a part of us. The transfer of it to another was as unthinkable as it would have been to give one of our grandchildren to someone else to raise.

When that did not work we kept getting offers to buy our mailing list. It was just under ten thousand and consisted of many who had already been introduced to buying books by mail. I stubbornly refused to sell it. It seemed to me it would be a complete betrayal of trust. Those who sent a subscription want the paper. They did not want to receive a fistful of mail every day advertising everything from neckties to cheese. When I announced that the mailing list was not for sale, I was told that everyone else was doing it. Some even became a little huffy and sarcastic. But none of these things moved me and we quit with our list— and our honor— intact.

Of course, a great many who lamented our planned

discontinuance wrote begging us to continue. This was especially true of those who had recently started to read the little journal and wanted to absorb more of my thinking. It was also the case with those who had been subscribers from the beginning. It had been like one of the family to them. I wrote them all, thanking them for their confidence, but telling them that I wanted the paper to die in my arms and lay it gently to rest. I did not want to see it go out with its back against the wall and the baying hounds moving in for the kill. A great many editors have continued too long and have done as much damage in their final few years as they did good in all of the previous decades of their writing.

Besides that, I had a lot of reading I wanted to do, and a lot of personal work that I wanted to perform. There were miles to go before I could sleep. There had always been certain inhibitions created by having to get out the paper. I felt that when I mailed out the last issue and laid down the pen it would give me a sense of freedom I had not known for years. But meanwhile I was in the final year and I made some serious and far-reaching suggestions to the brethren which would get us off the sectarian hook on which we had impaled ourselves. These were all bound together in the book "One in Christ." It has long ago sold out.

In August of 1975, I went to the congregation at New Liberty, near Windsor, Illinois for their centennial. It was a beautiful old meetinghouse out in the country. I had held meetings there when I was just coming into manhood. I had baptized scores of people in the nearby Kakaskia River. It was only about three miles from Sand Creek, where Daniel Sommer had read his fateful Address and Declaration which started us down the long road of fighting and division. Only eternity will reveal the cost of the strife which began with that lethal dose. When I first went to the area I was not only a victim, but an actual practitioner of the sectarian spirit. Now I rejoiced to see the descendants of those who had sued each other in the courts

sitting together in heavenly places.

Less than a week later I was back at a family camp in Mechanicsville, near Richmond, Virginia. I delivered four addresses which were entitled: "Can the Home Survive the Shock?"; "How to Keep From Coming Unglued"; "Who Is Raising Whom These Days?"; and "Darling, *You* Are Growing Old." I ran the entire gamut of life experiences from the purpose of the home through marriage, parenthood and old age. It was easy to talk to those who were eager to listen and we rejoiced to be with each other in the Lord.

I went next to the Area Men's Meeting in Chicago. It was great to be back with the men who worked in the city which Carl Sandburg called "Hog Butcher of the World, Tool Maker, Stacker of Wheat." I went over to visit the inner city work. It was doing good but I came away with a feeling that culturally we are ill-adapted as a people to penetrate the hard shell of the city. There are no doubt enough people in Chicago from a restoration movement background to make a congregation many times the size of any we have there. But they are hiding. They are running from themselves. Our rural, Southern-oriented, social culture and life-style has not equipped us to face the problems of a black, Oriental and Southern European conglomeration. It was great to talk and visit and eat with men who had accepted Satan's dare. But it was obvious that we needed a radical reformation, one that cut to the bone.

My very next work was a totally different kind. I was with the Northland Christian Church in Danville, Illinois. The congregation had a lovely structure in which to meet, and was composed of good middle-class Americans. It was a distinct change from the drug-pushing, prostitute-ridden, gang-harassed Chicago streets. It made me feel the force of "East is east and West is west, and never the twain shall meet." I will confess that this has been a source of a lot of anxiety to me. I have always held that the blood of Jesus will cleanse anyone regardless of

how filthy, dirty and scabby his sins may have made him. I have an almost unconquerable urge to button-hole people on the streets and tell them about the grace of God. I'm drawn by a deep inner compulsion, a sense of destiny, a real deep-down feeling that makes me want to go down highways and alleys and compel them to come in.

Next I went to Orrville, Ohio. If you do not know, this is the home of Smucker's— the jam people. Years ago the German family of Smucker began making apple butter on a small scale for sale to the neighbors. As time went on their fame spread and their business grew in Ohio like that of Walter Knott had in California. Now they produce thousands of tons of fruit, as well as making sorghum, honey and peanut butter. They have become "jam merchants to the world." Several of the members worked for them. The Smuckers had Anabaptist roots and this is evidenced in the town. It is a lovely and clean place, like German-oriented towns often are. Kenneth Baldwin ministered to a congregation of gracious and diversified folk.

The following week I was in Flora, Illinois to address the Southern Illinois Christian Convention. The town was named after the Roman goddess of flowers, whose festival, the Floralia, was inaugurated in Rome 250 years before Jesus was born. The meetings were held at First Christian Church which has in excess of 1250 members. I taught an afternoon workshop and spoke at night. The auditorium was filled to capacity.

I went next to Piqua, Ohio, which has a history reaching back before we gained our freedom from English domination. In 1749 a fort and trading post were established here. The town was incorporated as Washington in 1807, the same year Thomas Campbell left Ireland for America on the good ship Brutus. The name of the town was changed to Piqua in 1823. Dave Huddlestun was working with the congregation while I was there with the brethren.

It was while I was there I met Dr. Marcus Miller. He had just written a book "Roots By the River." He sent me a copy. I devoured it. I read it with such avidity I could hardly put it down until I had read every word of it. The preface begins with these words: "This is a commentary and a history of the Tunkers or the Old German Baptist Brethren who settled in the upper Great Miami and Stillwater Valleys of Ohio. It attempts to reveal a little of the personalities and human nature of those who lived in these valleys, a little of the physical and a little of the spiritual sufferings which they encountered, and a little of the thinking that went into some of the courses which they chose to take."

The book details the divisions which beset the "old Brethren." Like ourselves they were caught up in the frightful tensions which tore at a movement that was far removed from the social climate of ancient Judea, and like ourselves they had their "progressives" and "Faithful Brethren." They had problems with protracted or revival meetings, with Sunday Schools and with Social Meetings. They resisted bitterly a "salaried or paid ministry which was believed to be against the apostolic order." They had problems with the bicycle which was designated "a modern invention, popular in the world and creeping into the church." In 1925 they wrestled with the radio, and later with television as "an influence for evil." One of the biggest hassles was over the starting of Christian schools. Another was over the introduction of the automobile. Hours were spent in denouncing Ford and Chevrolet for leading us down a road with no ending. As I read this interesting volume, I could see our own movement on almost every page of this much older and more venerable attempt to "restore the primitive order." I was deeply indebted to Dr. Miller who still wears the "plain clothes" including the coat with the standing collar.

Incidentally, the Dunkard Brethren, in 1911, reached a dress decision which has been binding ever since. It includes the following statement: "That the brethren wear their hair and

beard in a plain and sanitary manner. That the mustache alone is forbidden. Parting the hair in the middle or combing it straight back is recommended for both brethren and sisters." The Dunkard Brethren should not be confused with the Old Order German Baptist Brethren. They have a common origin, but there have arisen differences which have driven them apart. Does that sound familiar to you?

My next trip was to Meadville, Pennsylvania. I found the congregation meeting a couple of blocks from the campus of Allegheny College. The college was started in 1815 and chartered in 1817. It was loosely affiliated with the Methodist Church and was noted for its library of 140,000 volumes. Ida M. Tarbell, who was a native of Erie County, had written "A Life of Abraham Lincoln" in 1900. In preparing for it she amassed a tremendous collection of Lincolniana which she left to the school. I went to the campus and was walking across it when I heard my name called. I was surprised to see a man whom I knew. He had grown up in the Churches of Christ but had long since gone to the Disciples of Christ. He was head of a department at the school. We felt that it was providential that I just happened to be walking across the campus so we could meet.

There were several brethren from the non-instrumental congregations who attended the meetings. Some came from as far away as Youngstown, Ohio. The auditorium was filled each night and we had a glorious time. Nothing marred our kinship with one another and the fellowship was unabated. I stayed with Brother and Sister Hessler and it was truly "a home away from home." After the meetings at night a group of brethren would go with us to the hospitable home, and we would talk until almost midnight.

I have thought a lot about the wonders of *koinonia*. As William Barclay says, it is such a rich word that no single English term can describe it. It literally means "to share a

common life." The New English Version so renders it every time it occurs. But the common life we share is that of the Spirit. It is not just putting up with one another, or enduring each other. It is at once so beautiful and thrilling that nothing else can ever take its place in the association of Christians. I think it was one of the grandest things that God ever did for us, the providing of a relationship that is so intimate and full it transcends our differences.

7. The Last Years of Mission Messenger

Mormons and Jews

Contents

Nell and I received a blow when we learned of the almost sudden death of Brother Melvin Burton at Escondido, California. We had known Melvin and Gladys most of their lives. They moved to Saint Louis shortly after we did and our families grew up together. Their son Curtis married our daughter Sue. Bro. Burton had served until retirement in the criminal investigation division of the Internal Revenue Service. He had helped to close the case against Tom Pendergast, the racketeering boss of Missouri, and had worked on the Al Capone case in Chicago. When he retired he was honored by the President of the United States as well as by many others in the political spectrum. There was never a breath of scandal against him.

In Oct., 1975, the Saint Louis Realtors' Association decided to have a prayer breakfast. It was to become an annual event if it was successful. They asked me to speak at it. A great deal depended upon the reaction. It was at 6:30 in the morning at a prominent hotel. Many of those who came had been "out on the town" the night before. A great many were smoking cigarettes as if their life depended on it, rather than the opposite. The president was a consecrated Christian gentleman. After breakfast he made a few remarks, led a prayer for God's guidance, and introduced me. I have never before felt the same nearness of the Spirit. I spoke about 18 minutes. After the first

five the attention was riveted. At the close there was a standing ovation. I am glad to report that the prayer breakfast is a regular thing now.

I was invited to come next to the Kentucky State Teen Convention at Lexington. It was great to see the hundreds of youthful Christians gathering for the occasion. The singing was rousing, the spirit encouraging and the atmosphere was excellent. It gave me a great thrill to touch so many lives while they were still in the dewy freshness of young manhood and womanhood. The courage, faith and hope of such people is a tremendous source of strength to me.

I went from there to Canada to the Ontario Christian Seminary. The president was Alan Larue. I had first met him years ago at a little rural congregation in Ohio. He was always a man of vision and foresight. He had gone to Toronto and built the school up to its present rating. It was a brilliant move. Toronto, an Indian name meaning "a place of meeting," was already the second city in Canada, in point of population. It had just begun to expand. A great medical, museum and musical center, it was also the home of Toronto University, one of the great educational centers of our day. The city was small in number, but had an impact beyond its size. It was great to be able to talk with the students between sessions and to share in their plans and ambitions.

December 3-5 found me at Wickliffe, Ohio. Here I was permitted to be with Jack Ashworth, who previously labored with the Church of Christ, but who had been delivered from a lot of the sectarian hang-ups. Because of the freedom and openness of the congregation it was under suspicion by many others in the general Cleveland area. The very first morning six of the preachers came together to question me. Just as soon as I announced we were ready for queries from the audience they "hogged the show" and sought to dominate the proceedings. It was rather interesting. They followed the pattern I have seen so

often. One would ask a leading question, and the other would have his hand in the air before I answered it. They laid down a barrage of questions but fortunately I had heard all of them before, many times.

One of the most interesting features about this kind of tactic which I have experienced so often is the reaction upon those who attend my meetings and who did not grow up in an exclusivistic Church of Christ atmosphere. They can hardly believe their ears. In most cases the questioners keep an eye on their watches and about five minutes before quitting time "they fold their tents like the Arabs, and as silently steal away." When they leave, someone is almost certain to burst out with, "Who in the world are those men, and what do they represent?" Of course, these men cannot eat luncheon in the meetinghouse, so they never meet people informally and personally. They can only hit and run, so they appear cowardly to those who cannot understand either their purpose or their method of trying to attain it. The sectarian spirit makes cowards of men who ought to be brave.

Since Kirtland was quite close, I was eager to go over and see this place which Joseph Smith made quite famous. It was very near the home of Sidney Rigdon, who was a Baptist preacher at Mentor originally. He was an eloquent man who was led into what was called "the current reformation" by Alexander Campbell, after an all night talk on the front porch at Bethany. He became very close to Campbell, even traveling with him by horseback to Washington, Kentucky, to take notes on the debate with McCalla.

Rigdon was led into Mormonism by Parley P. Pratt, who with his brother Orson, was another defector from the Campbell movement. Rigdon had a profound effect upon the developing Mormon faith and is credited with a lot of the theology which became part of it. He expected to become its head, succeeding Smith, who was shot to death in the jail at Nauvoo, Illinois, by

enraged citizens who resented his ambitious attitude and his taking of other wives. But he was shouldered aside by Brigham Young, and at the age of sixty returned a broken man to his boyhood home in Friendship, New York. Here he worked as a shingle-packer, disillusioned and upset, referring to himself as an "exile."

The "saints" as they refer to themselves, built a "temple" in Kirtland. It is still maintained by the "Reorganized Church" of Independence, Missouri, one of the five branches into which the movement separated. The caretakers and guides try to make it appear that the blueprint was inspired and the Lord acted as foreman in its erection. It is evident that this is only part of the myth of which the whole false system has been constructed. It has been built into one of the most cleverly-contrived fabrications ever devised to fool and deceive an unsuspecting world.

On two consecutive Tuesdays in December I was scheduled to be the speaker at the Messianic Forum luncheon in Saint Louis. These are held every Tuesday at noon at the Downtown Holiday Inn. They began on May 14, 1948, the day that Israel became a nation, following a resolution by the United Nations General Assembly, on Nov. 29, 1947. This called for an end to the British Mandate for Palestine which had been established by the League of Nations in 1922. I have now spoken about 36 times to the group, which is attended by Jews with a great deal of love for Jerusalem. Some of these are believers in Jesus, but a great many are opposed to him. They are held together by a mutual love for Israel, although their reasons for that love differ widely. I have been privileged to meet teachers and writers exiled from Russia, as well as presidents of large manufacturing concerns, and persons from every walk of life. The most versatile and articulate presentation I have ever heard in answer to my presentation about the Lordship of Jesus, was made by a manufacturer of men's pants.

Once I was invited to speak by the United Jewish Men of Saint Louis. I appeared with a popular and respected rabbi, who presented counter-arguments to my contention that Jesus was the Messiah. There were 800 men present for the dinner and program which followed. The thing which impressed me was the number of Jews who were humanists. The rabbi was in almost as much trouble as I was. The question period lasted an hour and he was attacked for his belief in the existence of God about as severely as I was for urging that Jesus was His Son.

The last event of the year was the Saint Louis Forum. This had always been an honest effort to discuss anything, regardless of how "sticky" it was, without qualm. Any person could feel free to state anything or to ask any question. In 1975 we stretched the program to the point that we engaged in open discussion of moral questions and obligations such as we had not discussed before. We had twice invited women to appear as speakers in a survey of women's rights and privileges in the church. But this time we invited two men who were doctors to frankly discuss the abortion issue; and two persons who were involved in the political spectrum to talk about the Christian's role in modern politics. We asked them to address frankly the problem of whether a Christian had the right to march in peace demonstrations, or to use the power of organized revolt to overthrow laws that were unjust.

Two students of prophecy talked about modern Israel in the plan of God. One of them felt that Jerusalem was destined to play a dramatic role in the future dealings of God with the world; the other felt that Jerusalem meant no more to God than Saint Louis or New York. This made for a good question period. There were two more who spoke on the subject of marriage and divorce especially as divorce and remarriage applied to one who was chosen to serve as an elder. I made an announcement of the forum in the paper but there was no coverage given it because by the time it was held the *Mission Messenger* was no more.

On December 1, Nell had addressed and wrapped the final paper and I had placed it in the proper bag according to the zip code. I loaded the nine mail sacks in the car as I had been doing each month for thirty-seven years and drove to the loading dock at the main post office in Saint Louis. I am sure it must have come as a great relief to Nell, and to Brother and Sister Ratliff, who had faithfully helped us wrap them for months. Sister Ratliff continued to do so after she had partially recovered from a paralytic stroke. I am not sure how we would have made it without the ministrations of this faithful pair. I said goodbye to the mail handlers on the dock and went into the weighing office and bade farewell to the men who had helped me so much. Only one was left who had been there when I started. I climbed in the car and started for home with mixed emotions. More than a third of a century lay behind me.

I could not help but think of the changes I had made in those years. In my next, and last article in this series, I hope to detail some of the changes in my perception of the will of God which have occurred to me. I have been attacked and abused for stating them. It appears that we are often more comfortable with one who continues to wear the rags and tatters of a disproven theology than with one who dons a new suit provided by the Spirit of God. If one tells the truth about changes to which he has been driven he becomes the victim of a verbal assault; if he lies or cavils or conceals his true feelings he becomes a recognized, if uneasy, party hero.

In the remainder of this space I want to thank all those who have helped us in any manner. Many of you are still doing so. Your encouragement and sharing are wonderful. I have often thought what I would say if I were requested to name the five persons who have most affected my life. I have reached the conclusion it would be impossible to answer. Surely God has brought all of you into my life for an eternal purpose. You have touched my life for good and I am forever grateful. I have survived three wars, and even two world depressions. I have

lived to see numerous changes in "the higher powers" that govern. Men have come, and men have gone, but I have continued with unabated faith in Him "who puts down kings and raises them up."

From one who was an intolerant debater and defender of the party line I have been delivered and made to see the earnest attempt to please God of many who have never heard of the Campbells. I have been led to see the inherent good in the youth of our land and have been able to properly appreciate the strength of middle age, and the wisdom and experience of old age. I am thrilled that I was invited to share this "Pilgrimage of Joy" with you, and since the journey is not completed I trust that you will pray for me that it may be finished as it began.

7. The Last Years of Mission Messenger

Last Time Around

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In this my final article in the present series, I want to suggest some of the things which I think I learned, and which have made such a noteworthy change in my attitude toward others. I constantly hear the charge that I am not the same man I used to be. I always answer that if I learn more tomorrow I will not be the same as I am now. I realize that I could skip these things. By doing so, my stock would rise greatly in some circles, but I would neither be faithful to my own convictions, nor loyal to Jesus, who is my only Lord.

Perhaps the most profound change came with the realization that the Church of Christ was simply another denomination and a sect. There is a difference. To denominate means to give a name or title to. To do this in order to separate and segregate those who wear it from other believers in Jesus is sectarian. To select a title that is found in the scriptures gives added weight to the divisive arguments which always result. And, while the expression "the church of Christ" does not occur in the sacred book, this does not deter some of the trivial arguments used to justify it as *the name* of the family of God.

It became obvious to me quite early that we had built up a System around the name we had selected, and we were seeking to save a man by getting him into that system. We were going the same route as the Church of God, the Nazarene Church, or the

Church of God in Christ. We had been betrayed into thinking that by conforming to a few items one becomes pleasing to God. But each sect has a different set of items. Each party in the church of Christ has a different set. All of these are determined by honest, but stubborn men, who value their own distinctives above the unity of God's people. But one is not saved by being orthodox. He is not saved by a System, but by a Savior.

I was made to realize that the sheep of God were not all in any sectarian fold, but were scattered over the partisan hills. Various things have been done to bring them together. Reformations have occurred at various times. These inevitably produced movements which were doomed to multiply the divisions. One reason for this was the designation "churches" for the various sects. They are not churches by any stretch of the imagination. There is only one church. There never has been but one. There will never be another. Every saved person on earth is a member of the one body. By the will of God we are all one, by the actions of men we are all divided.

People in the sects are not necessarily our enemies. They are flesh and blood. They hurt, feel pain, and have nosebleed. And we wrestle not against flesh and blood. It is easier to fight persons than to fight principalities and powers. It is easier to war against persons than to go up against the unseen power that controls this dark world. We are carnal and we like to see our shots reach home. We can see people wince, dodge and grow angry, and it makes us exult. We must completely change our battle strategy. We have been fighting other believers.

People in the sects worship the same God, believe in the Sonship of Jesus, read the same Bible, sing the same songs, meet on the same day and hour, strive for the same heaven and fear the same hell as do we. Surely it was the malevolence of Satan which caused us to direct our weapons against them instead of "against spiritual agents from the very headquarters of evil." There is not one indication in God's Word that Paul, if he had

been confronted with the same situation as ourselves would have turned his hand against every man and rejoiced that every man had turned his hand against him.

These people are hostages to Systems. From birth they have grown up and been reared in such Systems. Or in manhood, in the midst of the tragedy of the human predicament, they have fled to these Systems, as to cities of refuge. Our task is not to beat or belabor hostages. It is not to get the better of them. It is not to kill them. Any nation which kills hostages is inhumane, a violater of all basic human rights. We are to free hostages. But we cannot do so by contriving another System. Our walls are no better than those of other prisons. We must bring them to Christ and not introduce them to another custodian. This is the most difficult thing to do in our generation. It requires a vision of the unseen, a faith which looks beyond.

Another thing which I learned had to do with worship. I had grown up believing there were five acts of "public worship." These had to be performed on the first day of the week when the brethren met together, almost as a ritual. One of the insights I received from my study of the Word was that with the coming of Christ *all things* **were made new. At the same time "old things had passed away." I guess it was just too much to believe that all things were made new. They may have passed away, but I needed them for a security blanket. I held on to some of them like a baby retains the habit of "thumb-sucking." I continued to do so until I came to trust in Jesus like Abraham did.**

I shall never forget the afternoon that I was reading and meditating upon Jesus' visit with the Samaritan woman at the well curb at Sychar. It suddenly became clear to me that he lifted the subject of worship completely out of the realm of "the proper place." It was no longer a question of this mountain or Jerusalem. It was no longer what our fathers worshipped. It was not a question of being in the right place. There was no right place for the simple reason that there was no wrong place. It was

a matter of Spirit and truth for the true worshipper.

I could see that in Christ there were no holy places, holy things, or holy days. The idea of dedicating or consecrating a pile of brick or stone to God eventually became obnoxious to me. I came to truly believe that "the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with men's hands." No carpenters, no brick masons, no hod-carriers could negate that statement. I separated myself completely from the Jewish concept of speaking about a certain part of the building as a sanctuary. The idea of dedicating an organ, or a fountain, or something else to the God of the universe became silly, and what is worse, a sin. It became obvious that wherever I was it was a holy place because I was there. God dwelt in me. It was not a matter of going to a temple. *I was the temple!*

Whatever I did in my body became worship, when done in deference to the majesty and glory of God. The passage, "Whatsoever you do in word or deed," took on a new and deeper meaning. God was as interested in how I talked to my grandchildren on Monday as he was in what I said to a group sitting solemnly and gravely before me on Sunday mornings. He was as concerned in how I mowed my lawn, fixed a flat tire, or shopped at the grocery, as he was in what I did in Bible Class. It was a mind-boggling experience, a kind of explosive high to realize that everything— and I do mean everything— was worship of the Almighty.

I could see clearly how the "five acts" had been blown up into something that could be used as a hoe handle or baseball bat to beat people into submission. One of the best examples is "the act of giving." Out of the reasoning on this point came an accumulation of money, or hoarding. This created a treasury which necessitated a treasurer. This demanded business meetings and the reading of the treasurer's report, and so on, ad infinitum. I do not think that any of these are wrong. They are not sinful. But the idea that they are a part of God's revelation,

or that they are found in I Corinthians 16, is about as far-fetched as the idea that the synthesis of Thomas Aquinas is God's plan for his people. All of this talk about who can be helped out of "the treasury" and who must be helped before it gets to "the treasury" is just so much poppycock. It has all been distilled from feverish, factional hearts. It is divisive by its very nature.

One thing which helped to free me from the insufferable slavery of the sect was the realization that fellowship with God is on the basis of a personal covenant with the divine. We are not in fellowship with Christ because we are in fellowship with others, but we are in fellowship with others because we are in fellowship with Christ. The vertical relationship precedes and makes possible the horizontal and not the reverse. The vertical is primary, the horizontal is secondary. Fellowship is the sharing of a common life, and the life in which we share is eternal life. Men have no control over eternal life. They cannot admit one to it. They cannot discharge one from it. It is foolish for mere weak mortals to talk about receiving one into the fellowship. It is absurd to talk about withdrawing fellowship from him. That is institutional or organizational twaddle. It is a demonstration of "peanut-sized" thinking.

God did not entrust so wonderful a thing as the salvation of a single soul to the whim or discretion of sinful and changeable man, although He made men as His human agents to carry the Good News. But He enters into a personal and direct covenant with each one of us. He does so on the basis of divine grace. No human intermediary is required. No parent can make a covenant for his child. No one in authority can make a covenant for those who are subjects. Human favor has nothing to do with it. It is tragic that we have done with the word "testament" what we have done with many other majestic terms utilized by the Holy Spirit. We have whittled them down in our attempt to make them relevant to our human predicament. It does not take a lot of study to see the old covenant does not

consist of 39 books, nor the new covenant of 27.

We are distinctly told that the new covenant was not written with ink. All of the records, epistles, and even the apocalypse were written with ink. On this we have the testimony of the writers. There is a difference between the new covenant and the new covenant scriptures which grew out of it. The new covenant is written on fleshly tablets of the heart. It consists of the Agreement into which I entered with God and to which I subscribed. I surrendered to Him absolutely, unequivocally, until death silences my tongue or forces me to drop the pen from my nerveless fingers. The new covenant is not a written code. It is not a compilation of laws, statutes and judgments. We are not under law but under grace.

Along with this I learned the difference between the gospel and the doctrine of the apostles. The gospel is the *euaggelion*, the good news of what God did for us when we were helpless to do anything for ourselves. It is to be proclaimed. It is God's message for the unsaved. One cannot evangelize saved persons. The doctrine is for those in the body. It is not for the world any more than the gospel is for the church. I learned this from Alexander Campbell. Then I found out that he had learned it from Dr. George Campbell of Aberdeen, and from Dr. James McKnight of Edinburgh. So I obtained their valuable works and studied them, all the while becoming more convinced of the distinction.

Indeed I am thoroughly agreed with Alexander Campbell that there can never be a thorough reformation, so long as we ignore this vital principle. It is foundational to our goal. It is basic to its achievement. It is vastly more than a mere argument over semantics, or an empty discussion of words. The profundity of it, once seen, will commend itself to the genuine scholar as possessing the greatest potential for unity. It is saddening to see shallow minds which never had an original thought, denying it as a kind of joke.

Now that I have run my little course from birth up to the time when I discontinued publication of *Mission Messenger*, I shall bow out gently thanking you for the great patience you have exhibited in reading these monthly accounts. Brother Garrett has shown more than ordinary longsuffering with me and I appreciate it a great deal. Nell joins with me in this farewell and in the fervent prayer that God will bless all of you very richly indeed. Grace and peace be unto you!

BIBLIOGRAPHY
of Principal Works

by W. Carl Ketcherside

Main Menu

Collections of Radio Sermons

Radio Talks **(1944)**
Radio Talks **(Number Two) (1944)**
Seeking the Old Paths **(1944)**
The Sermon on the Mount **(1944)**
Clean Churches **(1945)**
The Sound of the Trumpet **(1945)**
Timely Topics **(1945)**
The Bible vs. False Theories **(1945)**
Shadows **(1946)**
Storm Clouds Over America **(1946)**
Actions in Acts **(1946)**
Happy Homes **(1946)**
Proven Proverbs **(1947)**

Other Works

Fighting Christians **(1942): Written during World War II, this 26 page booklet addresses the issue facing Christians as to whether they could scripturally engage in what was referred to as "carnal" (as opposed to 'spiritual") warfare." Taking direct aim at the position of David Lipscomb, who rejected the idea that the Christian could participate in civil government or in carnal warfare, Ketcherside parsed all the arguments to which**

his opponents appealed, citing Foy E. Wallace in his defense. Ketcherside maintained that if the sword belongs to the civil government, that he is party to its sword-wielding by virtue of being a part of that government. While expressing an awareness of the seriousness of recommending that one "take up arms in defense of democracy and the American way of life," he was convinced that such was the right thing to do. The book was published by Mission Messenger.

Concerning Christian Colleges **(1945): In this 56 page booklet the author asserts that the scriptural responsibility of the church for the religious education of its members and their children cannot be usurped by a human institution. Responding to arguments in favor of Christian colleges by A. G. Hobbs—included as chapter 2 of this book, Ketcherside makes his case for a church based system of religious education. "No Bible college was ever born of faith in God's plan," he wrote. "We must create again the concept of the church as God's Bible college for the training of the Christian workers." A portion of the booklet is taken up in opposition to the one-man pastor system which, according to author, relies upon the Christian colleges for training. It was his conviction that without the colleges, the pastor system would not persist. The book was published by Mission Messenger.**

A Clean Church **(1948): A series of essays on church discipline in which the author first describes the problem created by public sin within the local church and then outlines what he considers to be the appropriate approach to correcting the problem. Examines references in the NT scriptures to maintaining public order at the congregational level. Although this title has since been reprinted by other publishers, the position set forth is that of an earlier period in the author's life and does not reflect the views he came to hold in his later years. The book contains 165 pages divided among the following 14 chapters: Preface (Why I wrote this book), Sin in the Camp, What is Discipline, Personal Offences, Going to Law, Public**

Offences (Restoration of Offenders), The Effect of Discipline, Walking Disorderly, The Corinthian Example, The Results at Corinth, Congregational Autonomy, Principles of Procedure, Objections Considered, How to Avoid Public Discipline. The book was originally published by Mission Messenger.

Ketcherside-Porter Debate **(Ozark, Missouri, March 23-26, 1937). Ketcherside's introduction to public disputation took place when he was only 29 years old. Rue Porter was approaching his 48th birthday and had already engaged in 25 debates. Propositions for the debate were related to the "erection and maintenance of schools or colleges . . . for the purpose of teaching the Bible," and the "erection and maintenance of orphans homes . . . for the purpose of . . . caring for orphan children." Porter maintained that they were both authorized by the New Testament, whereas Ketcherside denied that such was the case. D. Austen Sommer reviewed the debate in** *Macedonian Call* **for April 1937, p. 2. The** *Gospel Advocate* **announced the upcoming debate, on page 7 of the February 23rd issue for 1937, but there appears to have been no follow-up report. Ketcherside fills several pages of his autobiography providing background and subsequent insight into the debate (see, "Chapter 3. Debates at Home & Fellowship Abroad: The Debating Years Begin"). The book, containing 174 pages, was printed by Rush Printing Co., Barnard, Missouri, 1937.**

Wallace-Ketcherside Debate **(Paragould, Arkansas, June 30-July 4, 1952): The first of two debates with G. K Wallace, of Temple Terrace, Florida, which took place from June 30— July 4, 1952, in a field near Paragould, Arkansas, from which it came to be called "the cow pasture debate." The debate covered four propositions: (1) The employment of a preacher to preach for the congregation as now practiced by the church of Christ, at 2nd and Walnut Streets, in Paragould, Ark., is scriptural. (2) The New Testament authorizes an evangelist to exercise authority in a congregation which he has planted until men are qualified and appointed as bishops. (3) The organization, by**

Christians, of schools such as Freed-Hardeman College is in harmony with the New Testament Scriptures. (4) The organization, by Christians, of schools such as Freed-Hardeman College is contrary to the New Testament Scriptures. (Ketcherside denied propositions 1 and 3, and affirmed 2 and 4.) The first proposition was taken up over two nights, whereas the remaining three were covered in one night each. Although Ketcherside never substantially changed any of the views he expressed during these debates, his subsequent understanding of the significance of our differing views of scripture prevented him from ever again regarding them as tests of spiritual fellowship. The book, published by Telegram Book Company in Longview, Texas, contains 286 pages.

Wallace-Ketcherside Debate **(St. Louis, Missouri, October 26-30, 1953). The follow-up debate with G. K. Wallace took place the following year in St. Louis, MO, October 26-30. The St. Louis debate covered the same propositions as in the Arkansas debate. The book containing the debate was published by the same company, Telegram Book Company, as the Arkansas debate. It contains 278 pages.**

Colley-Ketcherside Debate **(Dallas, Texas, December 1-4, 1953): The transcription of a debate held in the Beckley Theater in Dallas, Texas, December 1-4, 1953, with Flavil L. Colley over the question of whether securing a preacher as a minister of a congregation having elders, as generally practiced among the Churches of Christ in Dallas, is scriptural— a position which Ketcherside denied. Ketcherside's concern in the debate may best be reflected in his contention that "every man who has the ability to teach must have the right to exercise that gift, and he has an equal right with every other who possesses the same gift, if he is faithful." The debate fills 211 pages and was originally published in 1954 by Flavil L. Colley of Dallas, Texas.**

The Royal Priesthood **(First edition, 1956): This is the first book written by the author following the radical change in his**

understanding of spiritual fellowship and the unity of all believers, which began in 1951. The first edition, released in November of 1956, was followed in 1969 by a second, revised edition. The latter was included in the printed 12 volume edition of *The Writings of W. Carl Ketcherside***, published by College Press in 1997. The book examines the biblical teaching relative to the priesthood of all believers. The first half traces the necessity of a priesthood, its nature, rise and development under the Patriarchal and Jewish dispensations, and its culmination and perfection in the present era, styled "the ends of the ages." The second half of the book contains an analysis and reply to the Roman Catholic postulate of a special priesthood or clergy as set forth by Dr. John A. O'Brien in** *The Priesthood: A Divine Institution***. Prior to the publication of** *The Royal Priesthood***, Ketcherside announced, "The chapters on 'Priesthood and Ministry' and 'The Royal Priesthood' will commend themselves to all lovers of restoration." The first edition of the book, published by Mission Messenger, contained 193 pages. The second edition, by the same publisher, contains 199 pages. This is one of only two books that Ketcherside ever copyrighted (to protect copyrighted material quoted from a third party). The other was** *The Kingdom of the Messiah***.**

The Kingdom of the Messiah **(Print edition, 1957; Kindle edition, 2011): Traces the concept of the kingdom of God through the Old Testament, shows how God prepared for its coming, and discusses its nature and character. It is a study of the rule of heaven in all ages and contains an analysis of Revelation 20, concerning which the author states: "In regard to the millennium, it will establish that I do not hold the view that our Lord will return to earth and reign here a thousand years. I give the reasoning by which I reach that conclusion." The book contains 222 pages and was published by Mission Messenger. It is one of only two books every copyrighted by the author— the other being** *The Kingdom of the Messiah***. Two of his other books were published and copyrighted by Standard Publishing Company.**

Thoughts on Fellowship **(Bound volume of** *Mission Messenger* **for 1957-58)**

Covenants of God **(Bound volume of** *Mission Messenger* **for 1959-60)**

The Path of Peace **(Bound volume of** *Mission Messenger* **for 1961-62)**

The Unity of the Spirit **(Bound volume of** *Mission Messenger* **for 1963)**

The Brotherhood of Faith **(Bound volume of** *Mission Messenger* **for 1964)**

The Twisted Scriptures **(Bound volume of** *Mission Messenger* **for 1965)**

Deep Roots **(Bound volume of** *Mission Messenger***, 1966)**

Apples of Gold **(Bound volume of** *Mission Messenger***, 1967)**

God's Community **(Bound volume of** *Mission Messenger***, 1968)**

The Royal Priesthood **(Second edition, 1969; Kindle edition, 2011):** *See above description of first edition*

Simple Trusting Faith **(Print edition, 1969; Kindle edition, 2011): At the time this volume was published, the author wrote: "For a number of years I wanted to write . . . a volume of apologetics written in popular style so that college young people would read it. When the time came to write I decided that I would deal with the theme of God's existence, the manifestation of the Word in flesh, the virgin birth, the question of miracles, and the present possession of eternal life. I do not hold that we must discard all the values of the arguments made by our fathers for the genuineness and authenticity of the word." The**

thesis of the book, he had explained in a pre-publication announcement, is "that we need not surrender all of the apologetic approaches of the past in this intellectual age with its theories of relativism and liberalism." It is the intention of the book, he further explained, "to build faith and strengthen conviction" by providing "a clear depiction of the reasons for our belief in God, the genuineness and authenticity of the scriptures, the miracles by which the claims of the apostles were validated and other related matters." Hundreds of copies of this title were sent, free of charge, to college and university students who personally requested a copy from the publisher, Mission Messenger. The book contains 148 pages.

Christian Commandos **(Bound volume of** *Mission Messenger* **for 1969)**

Our Living Pattern **(Bound volume of** *Mission Messenger* **for 1970)**

One Great Chapter **(Bound volume of** *Mission Messenger* **for 1971)**

The Parable of the Telstar **(1972; 2012, Kindle Edition): Contains 16 essays taken from speeches given by the author throughout the country in 1971. The title of the book is taken from the first talk. "The Parable of Telstar" is assumed to be the kind of talk Jesus would make today to a Rotary Club luncheon, or to a high school assembly, which, in years past, was permitted. It is a parable up in the clouds and down to earth. The second talk, "My Only Creed," was made at the Unity Forum, conducted at Atlanta Christian College. The next four talks, given at Camp Wi-Ne-Ma, represent an exposition of chapter one of 1 Thessalonians, and are entitled: "Grace and Peace," "Three Things to Remember," "The Dynamite of God," and "Examples and Models." The next four talks, prepared for a convocation of college and high school young people, some of the latter identified with the "Jesus Folk," are: "The Real**

Revolutionary," "Moving Into the Twentieth Century," "The Fellowship of the Unashamed," and "Walled in or Walled Out." Additional talks included are: "Space Age Religion," "The Vitality of Christianity," "The Scarlet Line," "Is There Power in the Blood?" and "The Greatest Counterfeiter." Published by Mission Messenger, the book contains 224 pages.

The Divine Purpose **(Bound volume of** *Mission Messenger* **for 1972)**

The Question Box **(Bound volume of** *Mission Messenger* **for 1973)**

Heaven Help Us **(Print edition, 1974; Kindle edition, 2010): The purpose of this book is to stimulate thought and promote a deeper study of the revealed will of God as it relates to the person and work of the Holy Spirit in his relationship to the believer, to the Word, and to God. Since the author believes that God has spoken, and the revelation of what He has said is contained in the Bible, he maintains that experiences must be judged in the light of the Scripture, and not the reverse. Consequently, it is to Scripture that he turns to answer such questions as: Is the Holy Spirit a who or what? What are the implications of the Holy Spirit as Comforter? What is the sin against the Holy Spirit? How should the Spirit's presence affect daily living? Ketcherside wrote: "If this volume leads you into a life of sharing with the Father and all the other members of His family— our brothers and sisters; if it brings freedom from fear of the present; and if it strengthens your faith, it will have achieved its goal and God will be praised." Originally published and copyrighted by The Standard Publishing Company, publication rights were subsequently assigned to the Ketcherside family. Contains 176 pages.**

Pure Speech **(Bound volume of** *Mission Messenger* **for 1974)**

One in Christ **(Bound volume of** *Mission Messenger* **for**

1975) (2011, Kindle Edition)

The Death of the Custodian **(1976; 2010, Kindle Edition): Is the New Testament a code of laws which the professing Christian must follow? If not, what about the commandments of Jesus? What is the nature of the "new covenant"? How does the "new covenant" compare with the "old covenant"? In answering these and other questions, the author expounds upon the teaching of scripture regarding law and grace. This volume offers thought-provoking reading and serves as a study guide for every Christian. Originally published and copyrighted by The Standard Publishing Company which later relinquished publishing rights to the author's family, the book is 152 pages in length. Over the years, numerous editions have followed from several publishers under different titles.**

The Twisted Scriptures **(First edition, 1977; Diversity Press edition, 1992; Kindle edition, 2009): Introduced by the author as "a revised edition of my former volume under that name," he described it as dealing with "the tragic misuse of the sacred scriptures to justify our carnal strife and division." Referring to the book as "An exposure of the sectarian spirit that abuses the Bible in defense of divisions among Christians," Leroy Garrett regarded it as "One of [Carl's] most liberating books"— "as excellent as anything he ever wrote." The book examines each of the passages of scripture that have been used over the years to justify division within the Stone-Campbell restoration brotherhood over matters of doctrine. Shows how none of those passages has been interpreted correctly when used to divide brothers from one another. Concludes that scripture provides only three grounds for the dissociation of a congregation from one previously accepted as one of the redeemed: (1) denial of gospel facts, (2) moral turpitude, and (3) the factional spirit. The book contains eleven chapters titled: "The Twisted Scriptures," "Except They Be Agreed," "Another Gospel," "Gospel and Doctrine," "Conformity or Diversity," "Contrary to the Doctrine," "Withdraw Yourselves," "Walking in the Light,"**

"Receive Him Not," "The One Faith," "The Great Problem." There were 194 pages in the original publication.

Talks to Jews and Non-Jews **(1977; 2011, Kindle Edition): Shares his thoughts on several questions including: Are there three Gods? Did the prophets indicate that the Messiah to come was to be a person? Cannot the principles of Judaism accomplish the unifying of mankind? How can Jesus Christ be the 'Prince of Peace' in a world of strife and war? The discussion of these questions by the author with his Jewish audiences is fascinating reading for Jews and non-Jews alike. It offers an opportunity to gain a deeper appreciation of Jesus, as well as a better understanding of the Scriptures. The author also scrutinizes the Epistle to the Hebrews in which he enumerates the various ways in which the new state under Christ supersedes the old state under the law. Originally published and copyrighted by The Standard Publishing Company which subsequently relinquished publishing rights to the author's family.**

Adventure of Faith **(1978; 2011, Kindle Edition): Seeks to challenge faith that is not transformational, specifically faith that has been bottled up in traditional forms of Christianity in which the deep wells of** *koinonia* **and** *diakonia***, which the Spirit dug for our sustenance, have been filled up, leaving us to drink from shallow surface-water contaminated by theological waste which has been drained into it. The author suggests that one of the great adventures of our age could be the digging anew of these wells. He presents compelling evidence from Scripture that mediocrity is not to be the lot of any of God's children, since they have all been called and empowered to be God-containers, imitators of God, travelers on the road to high adventure. Contains 199 pages, published by Mission Messenger.**

Colony of Heaven **(1979; 2010, Kindle Edition): This work, published by the author four years after he ceased publication of his monthly journal,** *Mission Messenger***, is a running**

commentary in which Paul's letter to the Philippians is examined in the three-fold context of geography, history, and revelation. It is a treatment of spiritual and social values drawn from Philippians— described by Paul as "a colony of heaven"— in which the author puts the entire letter in the context of our own age and problems. 153 pages, published by Mission Messenger.

In the Beginning **(1980; 2011, Kindle Edition): This is the last book the author ever published (his autobiography was published posthumously). Its title has reference to the beginning of a new approach to unity which was first proposed by the founders of what later came to be known as the Stone-Campbell restoration movement (reputedly the largest religious movement indigenous to North America). It includes essays and speeches dating from around the year 1957, the year that marks a new "beginning" in the direction of the author's own mission and message. It contains the most comprehensive statement to be found of his views on Christian fellowship (chapters 13-21). It was in the nature of Christian fellowship that he perceived Christian unity to be grounded, and that a unity, by nature, tolerates a diversity of doctrinal deductions--due to the nature of Christian fellowship. With reference to his earliest essays of this period Ketcherside wrote in his autobiography: "They represented my crossing of the Rubicon, the burning of my bridges behind me. They were the first guns fired in my commitment to an unrelenting war against sectarianism, and especially against my own." Published by Mission Messenger, the book contains 216 pages.**

Pilgrimage of Joy **(1991; 2010, Kindle Edition): The last of Ketcherside's book, his autobiography, was published in installments by** *Restoration Review***, from January 1976 through December of 1981. It was later published posthumously in a single volume as** *Pilgrimage of Joy* **by College Press in 1991 and by SCM e-prints in 2010 in Kindle format. In this volume, the author tells the story of his own transformation from an**

advocate of unity in conformity to one of unity in diversity. He was an ecumenist, but he was convinced that unity would never become a kind of organizational get-together. In the final analysis it is personal, he would say. This book reflects the changes in his thinking over the years, from accepting others upon the basis of their conformity to his thinking to accepting others upon the same basis upon which God had accepted him—with all of his ignorance and imperfection. In 1947, and again in 1951, he was invited to spend several months teaching in the British Isles. He later spoke at conferences in Brazil, Mexico, and Puerto Rico. While he held no academic degrees, the author spent much of his time on college and university campuses across the country, confronting the philosophical forces that ally themselves against the sovereignty of God. In his latter years, his attention was focused on serving the needs of those who had been marginalized in the inner city of his own St. Louis. His autobiography covers the period of his life from birth (1908) through the year he ceased publishing his monthly journal, Mission Messenger (1975).

Books Published by Mission Messenger

History of the Church Through the Ages, **by Robert Brumback (1957)**

Where Jesus Walked, **by Robert Brumback (1959)**

Voices of Concern, **edited by Robert Meyers (1966)**

The Holy Spirit in Our Lives Today, **edited by W. Carl Ketcherside (1967)**

Thoughts on Unity, **Edited by Stanley Paregien (1971)**

Declaration and Address | Last Will and Testament, **by Thomas Campbell | Barton W. Stone (1972, 1975)**

Availability of Works by W. Carl Ketcherside

All of the essays and books appearing in the above bibliography are available in the "Ketcherside Collection" of archive.org, from where they may be freely downloaded in a variety of formats. Many of Ketcherside's works may also be found in e-book format on the websites of Amazon and Barnes and Noble.